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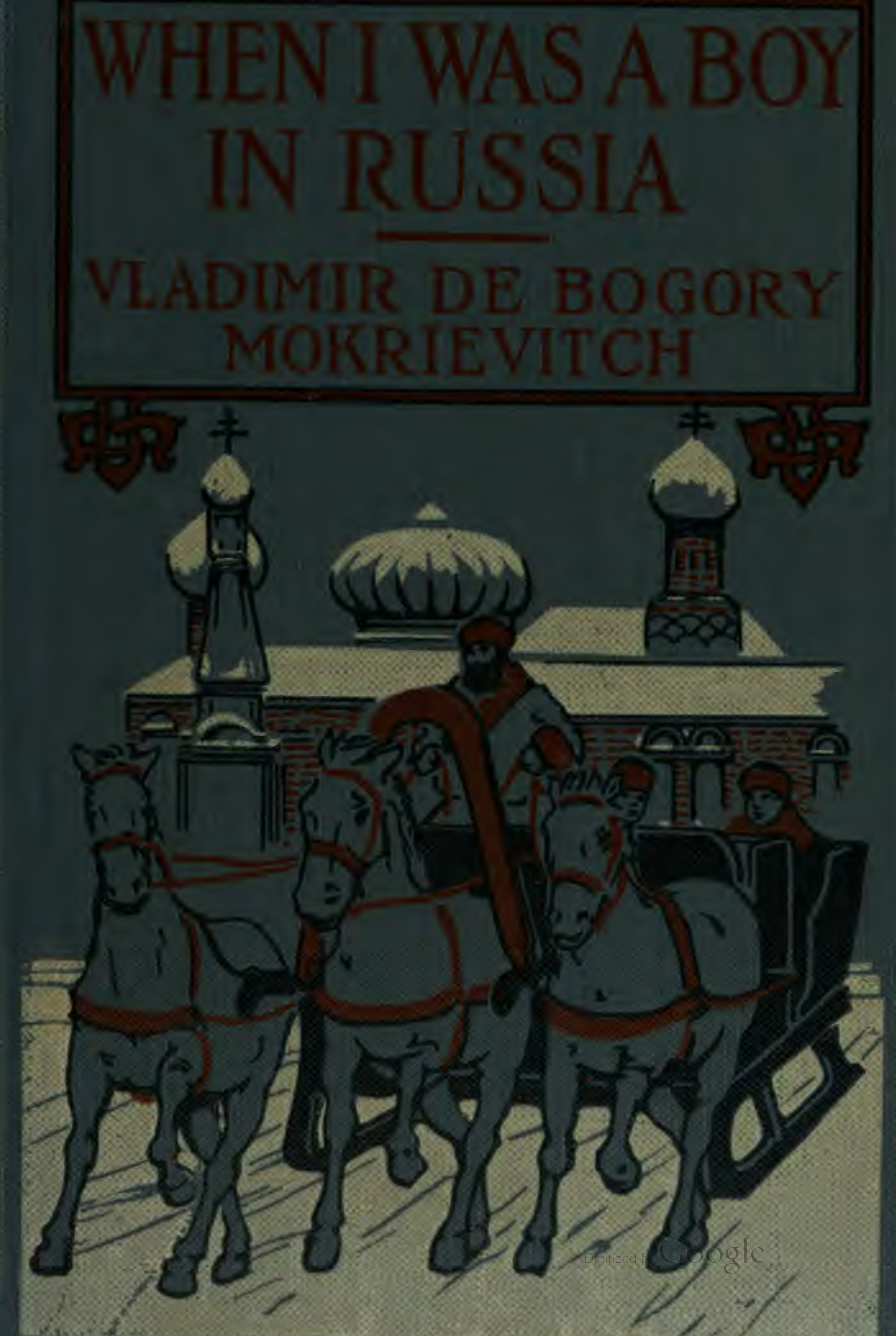
WHEN I WAS A BOY IN RUSSIA

VLADIMIR DE BOGORY MOKRIEVITCH



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WHEN I WAS A BOY IN RUSSIA

BY

VLADIMIR DE BOGORY MOKRIEVITCH

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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When I Was a Boy in Russia

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

THROUGH the kind offices of the author's talented daughter, Natalie De Bogory, of New York, we are able to acquaint American children with child-life in Russia, and at the same time show the spirit of this mighty empire by means of the story of Vladimir De Bogory Mokrievitch as told by himself.

The life of this noted man, who gave up the privileges of noble birth in order to serve his fellow men, is well calculated to stir to enthusiasm the admiration of American youth.

The author's life in America, as well as his broad interest in freedom everywhere, renders him particularly well fitted to tell us of the tyranny of Russian schools in the middle of the last century, the freeing of the serfs, the uprising for

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liberty among the university students, and finally of Siberia, in order that we may see how other nations than ours have struggled up the bitter path to liberty.

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Boston, February 22, 1916.

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WHEN I WAS A BOY IN RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

THE BATTLES OF THE CHERRY ORCHARD

I HAD more play, when I was a little boy in Russia, than most American boys have, and my play was altogether different. I didn't go to school until I was ten years old, and until that day of wonder—the first day at school—I studied at home and played all over our estates.

My father was a Colonel of Hussars in one of the Tsar's regiments, and he was so fond of horses that even after he had retired from active duty in the army, our stables were never empty of the fleet Arabian steeds he loved so well.

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"I can't imagine home without horses," he said one day to Mother, when she suggested that he reduce their numbers, and his stern face, with its long, flowing beard, softened as he thought of his stable favorites.

Father was a noble, of course, for in that time no one could be an officer in the Russian army unless he belonged to the nobility. He also came of warrior stock, and as far back as Russian records go (and they are very old) there was always one of my ancestors an officer in the army. As I remember Father, he was already grey; he had a stern face, with strong lines on each side of the mouth; his soft white hair was long and his flowing white beard reached halfway down to his waist. In public he wore a gorgeous uniform consisting of a brilliant blue tunic, so heavily braided with gold across the chest that it shone like a cuirass, red riding-breeches and black, Russian leather boots, reaching just be-

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low his knee. In the house Father wore civilian dress, but both when he went out and when people came to see him, he always wore the dashing Hussar uniform. He never smiled or laughed, and my daughter is always telling me that I, too, seldom smile and never laugh.

"Pahpa," I said one day, climbing on his knees, "if I tickle you, won't you laugh?" whereupon I tickled him, and his brown eyes lit up with humorous twinkles and sparks almost flew from them. But his mouth remained stern and set, although, like all Little Russians, he loved fun and jokes.

There were five of us children. Piotr was the eldest; then Ivan, than whom I, Vladimir, was two years younger; my sister Aniuta; and another sister, who was still younger. In the evenings Father often told us stories of the Russian wars, in which the nobles of Little Russia and of the Cossack country near by had always participated. I often

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heard the tales of the cavalry charges of the Hussars and of the Cossacks. We boys were so familiar with the Crimean War that we often enacted in our play the campaigns Father had described so graphically, and he taught us that to be men we had to be brave and stoical.

As I remember Father, he was actively engaged in the management of the estate, which, though it would not have been considered a large one then, stretched over several coombes or small hills of the undulating country of the Podol government.

In Russia the word "government" corresponds to the American word "state"; the Podol government being about the size of Illinois. We had serfs on our estates, so it was necessary to keep them all employed, and although they were given their freedom when I was still at school, I can well remember the numerous families of serfs living and working on our land.

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SOME RUSSIAN CHILDREN.

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My mother also was a noblewoman, and like all women of high rank she had great responsibilities and took her duties as mistress of an estate very seriously. It was for her to superintend all the work of the women serfs: the weaving of the cloth of which our clothing was sewn, the growing of the flax and the preparing of the linen fibres, for all our linen also was made on the estate.

I remember very well that, according to custom, although Mother had dozens of domestic slaves, the making of jam was never left to them, but was the special concern of the lady of the house. Mother was very generous and hospitable, and, consequently, the amount of jam and preserves that was made in the huge home kitchen was enormous. I always took care to know when jam was being made, and, together with Ivan and Piotr, never failed to get my share of the *penka* or sweet skimmings.

"Volodia," my mother used to say re-

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provingly, using the diminutive for my name, "you'll turn into sugar if you eat so much!" Even this threat did not frighten me away, and I am still just as fond of sweet things, although it is half a century since that time.

The Podol government was famous for the embroidery which was done first by the serfs, and now by the peasants. It was a part of Mother's duties to superintend the embroidering of both clothing and household linens, which were richly decorated, usually with black and red or blue embroidery. Nothing we had was machine-made.

In addition to this constant urgency of household duties, Mother entertained largely, and in the Russia of that time hospitality implied the invitation of twenty or thirty persons at a time, most of whom stayed for two or three days, sometimes for weeks, and all of whom generally remained over night. During the shooting season our neighbors came

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to shoot over our preserves, and Father would visit other estates. Hospitality was profuse all over the country, for the estates of the nobles were large and far apart and they had no one but themselves with whom to associate.

In those days—that was sixty years ago —the houses of the nobles carried out the patriarchal life of early Russia. Our house, like most of them, was only one story high, but it covered a large area, spreading itself out in the shape of a hook, containing many rooms,—how many I do not remember. The rooms were large, with stained floors, and they were heated by Russian stoves which were built into the house, and in which we burned the wood cut from the forests on the estate. Although the Podol government is in Little Russia, or toward the southwest corner of the great Russian empire, in winter it was so cold that double windows were put in, and the stoves never went out. The roofs were low and

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thatched, for, in those days, the modern use of tiles and slates was unknown.

The house was surrounded by chestnut trees and stood at the end of a huge court-yard, all sides of which were built up. Here, on either hand, were the dairies, the barns, the stables and little house of the foreman, who acted as manager of the estate. Just inside the gate, which was guarded by two huge weeping-willows, which I often climbed, and a giant poplar, which I was never able to climb, stood the well. To this the peasants came for their water every evening, and thus the courtyard in front of the "great house" became the general gathering-ground of the serfs. The courtyard was always full of bustle and excitement, and so the weary leagues of land that stretched around us never gave the sense of loneliness that is found in the American prairies.

The whole estate was my playground, but my brothers and I played mostly in the orchard, which surrounded the house

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on all sides except the one facing the yard. We had almost every kind of fruit, and I remember especially the cherry-trees, which were very old and very big, with masses of cherries. When they were ripe, Father used to call in the foreman, Gavrilo, and say to him:

"Tell everybody that they can go to the orchard with pails and get all the cherries they want."

"Yes, *Barrin*" (Master), Gavrilo would reply, "the cherries are very abundant this year."

The serfs then spent what time they had to spare in shaking down the cherries from the trees, or we boys would climb the branches and shake for the mere fun of sending down showers of juicy fruit on the heads of the *devchata* or peasant girls. For weeks we lived on cherries, and when everybody had as many as they could preserve, the pigs were allowed to eat the remainder. Mother spent her days during the cherry season in preserving, and

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as the jars were put on the shelves of our large cool cellar, Ivan and I would creep around to see where they were being stored.

"They're in that corner where Pahpa kept the bees last winter," Ivan would whisper. It was essential for us to know the location of the desired crocks, in order that the raids we contemplated on them might be successful.

Father never allowed the weeds and undergrowth in the orchard to be cut, and every year he had to defend his preference from Mother's attacks.

"The weeds look so untidy from the house, Pahpa," Mother would say with gentle reproach.

"They don't look particularly well," Father acquiesced, "but you know that the best honey comes from the wild flowers. If we cut them, we won't have either the quantity or the same aromatic honey. . . ." Father always won his point, for Mother knew that he loved his

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bees, and that, next to his horses, he prized his numerous hives.

So the weeds were allowed to grow, till they stood above our heads, and Piotr, Ivan and I used to have exploring and rescue parties in the orchard, pretending that it was a jungle. I can recall that the gooseberry bushes were so high that we used to hide under them and not be seen at all. Raspberries, which grow freely in Russia, we also had in abundance.

On the outskirts of the estate were many elms, not large and spreading like the American trees, but the slighter witch-elms. The boughs of these trees were so elastic and springy that when we climbed on them they bent and swayed like giant fishing rods. Ivan and I were particularly fond of climbing them.

"Vania," I shouted to Ivan, using his pet name, as I swung wildly in the air, "watch me—I'm a monkey!" As the bough sprang upwards elastically, I let

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go, and the spring carried me to the next elm, where I caught another bough, and so we traveled through the wood, making believe it was the forest primeval.

When we tired playing "monkeys," there was the little lake beyond the orchard.

"I'll get there first, Volodia!" Ivan would cry as he ran, rapidly unfastening the only two garments he wore: an embroidered linen shirt and linen trousers.

"No you won't," I would pant behind him, struggling with the buttons; but he was two years older, so I rarely was able to beat him. By the time we reached the pond, which was not far from the house, both were undressed and with a wild cry we leaped into the warm, clear water. We spent a great deal of our time on this lake bathing and swimming, or watching the water, hanging from the boughs of a weeping-willow tree, which drooped so that its twigs touched the surface of the

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pond. One end was covered with a water plant and looked like a lawn. There I often saw birds settle, and it was only when their feet sank and they felt the water below that they rose hastily with a little frightened chirp.

Wonderful journeys we boys made over that lake. Often we were shipwrecked mariners, stretched out helplessly on the raft, which was one of the lake's chief attractions to us, or sometimes we lay flat on it, heads over the edge, watching the tench swimming in the clear water. Some of them were nearly a foot long. There was a fascination about the teeming life at the bottom, midst the feather-like water-weeds. On warm sunny days the weeping-willow was reflected in the brilliant waters, and for many years I wondered why the tree was there, upside down.

"Is it another tree?" I asked Ivan, as we basked on the raft, very still, so as not to disturb the image.

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"No," said Ivan, "it's the spirit of the tree."

Mother taught us to read very early, and we read a great deal. There are very few boys' books written by Russians, but all the great historical writers are in translation. "The Three Musketeers" by Dumas was an especial favorite, and since there were three of us boys, we enacted anew, over and over again, the adventures of d'Artagnan, Porthos, and Aramis. I was always the quick-witted d'Artagnan, resourceful and intrepid; Ivan, with his dreamy, idealistic nature, played the part of Aramis, the true gentleman, and the more gross part of Porthos fitted Piotr. We were all satisfied with our parts, and never changed them.

One day, I remember, it was very sunny and the air was particularly exhilarating. We laid out the plan of a battle royal, and our enemies were the honey-giving weeds in the orchard. With wooden swords we attacked our numerous "enemies," snip-

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ping off their heads with dexterous blows. The "foe" made no resistance, so we mowed our way through with shouts of triumph, leaving a trail of ruth behind. We did not notice how the character of our "enemy" changed, and we found ourselves mowing down the tall corn, a field of which was planted beyond the weeds. The "enemy" lay dead around us in hundreds, and when enough of the corn was trampled, flushed with victory, we started off for a cool dip in the lake.

That evening, at supper, Father said to Mother, looking sternly at us boys the while:

"The cows must have got into the corn field this afternoon, *Mamoussia* (little mother); they must be more carefully herded, for they trampled down a great deal of the corn."

We took the hint. It was generally wise to pay heed when Father spoke, for though kind, he was an army officer and knew exactly what discipline meant.

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Mother always protected us, but it was not possible to cover all our misdeeds.

Of course we learned to ride horseback soon after we could walk, and except for several of the horses that were reserved for Father, we had the run of the stables. We generally rode barebacked and at a wild gallop along the dusty roads, any peasants that might happen to be near, scattering at the thud of the flying hoofs.

On one occasion—I wasn't going to school yet—a bull that had got away from the herd stopped to watch us as we whirled by.

"Looks ugly!" shouted Piotr.

His warning was too late. The bull, having decided that I was the most objectionable of the party, started after me with his wicked little eyes shining, his horns low and his tail straight out in the air. My horse, maddened with fear, turned toward home, over the fields and through the woods. I was nearly swept off his back several times by low-

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hung branches and my face and hands were scratched with the brambles and briers that switched across me as we tore through the underbrush. Fortunately the gate into the courtyard of the house was open and the horse rushed through it, heading straight for the stable, the angry bull only a few feet behind. Without stopping, my Arab galloped full speed toward the low door, giving me hardly any opportunity to realize my danger.

"Jump—jump—on the roof!" came shouts from the men working in the courtyard.

No one moved.

Instinctively I rose on my knees, half crouching on the horse's back, and jerked myself upwards just as he reached the door. The force with which I was riding threw me up on the low-pitched stable roof, up which I rolled and down on the other side, falling safely on the soft weeds beyond. The straw of the

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thatched roof scratched me a good deal, and I was bleeding from the cuts and bruises.

A moment later Piotr came riding up and jumped off his horse.

"I'm all right," I said, breathing heavily, but getting up and trying to look unconcerned.

"That ride," said Piotr, in his grave, judicial way, "was just like d'Artagnan's escape from the ruffian spies. I salute you!"

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CHAPTER II

FAIRIED WINTER IN THE UKRAINE

WITH the first flurry of snowflakes, our lives and habits changed. As the house sank deeper and deeper in the ever-falling snow, our great and persistent play-enemies, the weeds of the orchard, began to disappear, their tips alone remaining as dark spots on the white background. Instead of bees, they now attracted birds, who flocked in hundreds to peck at the dry seeds. Yet the bees were not forgotten.

It was always Ivan who suggested an expedition to the cellar.

"Volodia," he said, with just a slightly shamefaced look, "won't you go down with me to listen to the bees?"

So, quietly, with our wooden swords still girded on as a protection against

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the ever-lurking enemy, we crept down to the warm, dark cellar, where in a corner the beehives stood. We needed no light to guide us, for the low buzzing of the bees could be plainly heard, and we crouched down beside them, close together.

"I wonder what they are talking about?" hazarded Ivan.

"They might be telling each other stories," I answered, listening to the soothing hum, which has always retained for me its mysterious charm.

"No," said Ivan, "I think they're arguing why so many have to work to keep the idle drones."

But I persisted that they only told stories, and even now I listen to the bees with the same thrill of mysterious imaginings. Many a time, after that, Ivan's childish interest in the workers and the drones recurred to me. It was a prophecy of his life.

Our winter wars, always an important

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part of our daily routine, were well provided with munitions. I remember the gigantic snow forts we built, for we had all winter in which to build them, and the snowball ammunition that was prepared for the engagements made huge piles behind the ramparts. We naturally played with certain boys of our serfs, but in winter this increase in numbers was particularly welcomed. We built great snow men that towered above us, and we had secret tunnels in our snow hills that took a long time to melt.

Another source of great joy was skating, and when lessons were over, we would put on our heavy fur-edged coats, padded with the wool of our own sheep, and scamper off to the lake, just as eager to skate as we had been to swim. I remember very well the day that I graduated from the wooden skate, and first learnt the joy of the keen, steel blade. There was great rivalry between Ivan and me, and although he was older, I

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could beat him at figure-skating. I spent my time writing my name on the ice, of course in Russian letters, and figure "8's" I considered a simple feat.

The peasant boys, or *hloptzi*, always fixed up a *furrkadlo* or ice merry-go-round. A heavy wooden post was first driven into the ice in the middle of the lake. The *hloptzi* then attached to it a thin pole about thirty-six feet long, so arranged that it could swing freely round and round the pivotal post. To one end of this lever a small sled was fastened, and the other end was left protruding about six feet beyond the post. Two people could get into the sled and then it would be whirled around at a terrific speed by pushing on the shorter end, those riding in the sled making it go even more swiftly by striking the ice with the foot. How we enjoyed skimming like birds over the smooth, shining ice! The roar of the *furrkadlo* could be heard a mile away on clear frosty days.

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Although cold weather and storms did not keep us indoors, yet the winter days were short, and we played many indoor games. We boys were especially fond of *babki*, or pig-bones, a kind of ninepins made from the bones of a pig's leg. The initial charm of the game lay in the difficulty of getting the bones with which to play it. Every time a pig was going to be killed, its bones had claimants long before the fatal day. Clumsy playing meant the loss of bones. As these could not be replaced with any degree of ease, and either they had to be won back or the loser wheedled them from Ksenia when the next pig was killed, it followed that every game was striven for in bitter earnest.

In the living-room, where we played *babki*, we were also allowed to spin tops. The room was almost as big as a tennis court, so we had plenty of room to spin those that were made for us by handy peasant boys. All the tops were bril-

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liantly colored. One of the boys among the serfs had a positive genius for making them, and although he showed me many times the simple process, I never achieved his success.

Often, while we were engrossed in seeing whose top would spin the longest, a faint sound of bells reached our ears.

"Pahpa's got the troika," I was always the first to exclaim, for my hearing was very keen. "Let's get Mahma to ask him if he'll take us out." We knew that Mother was our best ally, and she would often secure from Father privileges for us which our own clumsy methods sometimes lost.

"Pahpa," she would say, going outside the house where the troika stood, "can the children go?"

Father would look at us and our eager faces, and then the sparks would light up his stern eyes as he nodded his acquiescence.

Bundled up in our coats and blankets

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TROIKA.

FREIGHT SLEDGE.

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we climbed into the troika, or three horse sled. Bells jangled on the arched wooden neck-harness peculiar to Russia. The sled was filled with straw, into which we snuggled. Lightly Father touched the horses, and we were off! I can still remember the whistling of the wind as we flew over the smooth hard ground, and I have never seen such driving anywhere as in Russia.

During the long evenings we often played blind-man's-buff, the game of all games beloved by Russian boys and girls. We were allowed to invite into the house Timko, one of my playfellows, whose mother had been my grandmother's serf, and in whom much confidence was placed. Timko and we three boys had grown up together, for he was only two years older than I, and I always found him a willing companion in my rougher games. There was never any stiffness between us and the serf or peasant boys, for they knew that we were the *baritchi* or young mas-

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ters, and that they belonged to the village. We were allowed to make as much noise as we pleased, my mother only occasionally glancing into the huge room when a particularly loud burst of boisterousness made her fear for the safety of the furniture.

At other times we avoided the noisy games, and found our own pleasures in a quieter mood. Ivan and I, who were inseparable, had a secret between us. We both loved the kitchen circle, and it was undoubtedly there that were laid the seeds of that love for the peasants which became our ruling interest in later years.

The kitchen was a large, low room, with a great open fireplace and oven on one side, along a ledge of which stood earthenware pots. This was Ksenia's kingdom. Here she spent her days cooking for the whole household. In her homespun and brightly embroidered peasant dress, she fitted there. Around the walls of this big kitchen were long

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benches stretching from corner to corner, and here, after the day's work, the peasants came for their supper. The men took off their heavy fur jackets and clumsy footwear, and sat at ease, chatting among themselves. Some settled on the benches, while others sat on the tree-stumps, of which several were scattered around. Still others climbed on the oven and dozed there comfortably till meal-time. This was always the favorite spot of the Russian peasant, and the *lejanka*, as it is called, is the place of honor, for there it is warm, no matter how cold the wind outside.

The vast expanse of the room was lighted by a burning log stuck into a clumsy slab of clay, built into the ledge of the fireplace, in which two holes were made for logs. These were chopped off from the still burning logs and changed when they burnt out. In this semi-darkness, fogged with a slightly acrid smoke, and peopled with tired men,

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Nikola, the story-teller, told fearful tales of robbers and ghosts and dead people. And as I listened to these, the shivers would creep down my back, and Ivan and I would press closer to each other and move away from the windows where the cold moonlight cast weird shadows upon the snow-covered weeds and the bare branches of the orchard trees. The wind swayed the ice-covered branches and made them crackle in the quiet night, and Ivan would whisper to me patronizingly:

"Volodia, if you wake up to-night and you're afraid—you can wake me; I won't mind."

The glow from the fire and the flickers from the torch played over the moveless and tired group, while Nikola, speaking the Ukraine dialect, with its picturesque expressions, told the story of the moujik Prokop and his dealings with the Tsar Goblin.

"Prokop was a very poor moujik—so

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poor that he often had no food," Nikola began, while the assembled *hloptzi* leaned forward eagerly. "One morning as he was leaving his *izba* to work on the fields he could find to eat only one small crust of bread. He took it, grateful that there was even that much. When he had come to the field, had hitched his oxen and made his plough ready, he took off his coat, wrapped in it the crust of bread for his midday meal, put the bundle under a bush and went to work.

"Now a goblin had been sitting near that bush, underground, and he saw the moujik put away the crust. He was an under goblin and had been sent from the Dark World Underground to God's world of the sunlight to try to make at least one man discontented with his lot. There was only one requirement, and that was that he must succeed with the first man he tried, for if he failed, he would be compelled to return to the Dark World and tell his failure to the Goblin

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Tsar, who could then punish him. He could make him live for a whole year in a hole under a church, which is an awful fate for a goblin."

Many of the listeners crossed themselves, and there was a silent pause while one of the moujiks replaced the burnt-out torch with a fresh one. The log spluttered with a brighter gleam, and Nikola went on:

"Now the under goblin knew that Prokop had only this crust of bread to eat. Making a face at the moujik, who was ploughing, the goblin unwrapped the bundle and took the crust. Then he put the coat back under the bush. The crust was hard, very hard for a goblin's teeth, but the goblin had to eat it because Prokop might say something that had prayer words in it, hoping that the bread would come back, and then the goblin would have to return it. But if he had eaten every crumb, he couldn't give it back, no matter what Prokop said.

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"At last the sun rose half way in the sky and Prokop stopped to eat his dinner. He went over to his coat, unwrapped it and looked in vain for the crust. The goblin stood invisible, expectantly rubbing his hands with their long, sharp nails and waited anxiously for Prokop to say some complaining and unholy words.

"But the monjik did not. After a moment's silence as he discovered his loss:

"'May my crust be as welcome to him who took it as it would have been to me,' said Prokop.

"He walked to the spring, where he drank his fill of water and returned to work.

"The goblin stood dumfounded, for all his plans had failed. Hastily he returned to the Dark World Underground and presented himself to the Tsar Goblin.

"'Your Imperial Majesty,' he said trembling, 'I took away his last crust from a moujik, and he only uttered a kindly wish!'

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"The stern Monarch looked at the cowering goblin and said:

"'I give you three years in which to catch that moujik. If you fail then, I'll make you count the grains of dust on every cross in the world. Go!'

"Very sad and frightened, the goblin hurried away from the Awful Presence. He changed himself into a man, went to Prokop and asked the moujik to hire him during the ploughing season. Prokop was sorry for him, so he told him that he could stay and work, although he, too, was a poor man.

"Prokop, never suspecting that this man was a goblin, accepted his friendship and listened to his advice.

"The first year the goblin advised Prokop to sow all his wheat on his hillside patch and none in the valley. Sure enough, it was a season of great rains, and while the crops of others rotted, Prokop was able to gather so big a harvest that he could not even use all the

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wheat, and some was left. He did not know what to do with it.

"The next year the goblin advised Prokop to sow his wheat in the patch of land that lay in a swampy valley. There was a drought that year. All the crops dried up and there was famine and suffering, but Prokop had so much wheat that he could not use it during the winter and he had still a great deal of grain left over.

"Then Prokop had too much wheat and he wondered what to do with the grain.

"'I'll show you how to make vodka,' said the disguised goblin, rubbing his hands with glee.

"Prokop, who knew nothing about vodka, or whiskey, and was quite unsuspecting, was willing to be shown. So vodka was made of the extra grain, and Prokop invited many moujiks to his izba and offered them the vodka to drink.

"After the first glass the moujiks be-

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came suspicious and cunning. They showed signs of distrust and watched each other warily. After the second glass, they became quarrelsome like wolves and snapped angrily at each other's remarks. Two of the men began to fight. And, as the goblin watched them, he made grimaces of delight and chuckled to himself.

"After the third glass of vodka, the moujiks became sullen and sleepy. They staggered out of the izba and into the gutters before it, where they lay on the street like swine. The goblin watched Prokop as he lurched from the izba and fell, and he was happy. He felt sure that at last he could return to the Tsar Goblin with confidence in his future in the Dark World Underground. So he changed back into his goblin shape and appeared before the black throne.

"'Well,' said the Goblin Tsar, 'what have you done to reinstate yourself in the Dark World?'

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OLD RUSSIAN *MOUJIK*, OR PEASANT.

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"So the goblin told of his three years' work and described Prokop, lying in the gutter, face downward.

"'You must have put the blood of a fox in the vodka to make the moujiks cunning,' said the Tsar Goblin, 'and the blood of a wolf to have made them fierce, and the blood of a swine to have made them act like the swine that lie in gutters!'

"'No, I didn't do any of these things,' said the under goblin. 'I didn't have to do them, for in every man there is much of the animal, only it has to be brought out. As long as Prokop did not have enough to eat, he worked well and lived without discontent, but as soon as he had more than he could eat, he learned to make vodka, and that brought out the animal desires that were in him.'

"'I don't see that you have done anything,' said the Dark Emperor; 'had you put the blood of a fox, a wolf and a swine in the vodka, you might have claimed

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that it was your act which made Prokop discontented with his lot. But now he doesn't fight and lie in the gutter because you have made him wish to be a fox, a wolf and a swine, but because the vodka is stronger than he. You have failed,' thundered the Monarch, pointing a fearful finger at the trembling goblin. 'Now go and count the grains of dust on all the crosses in the world.'

"He will count them until the Judgment Day," concluded Nikola, "for are we not always erecting new crosses to show God's love?"

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CHAPTER III

THE WITCH-EVE OF ST. JOHN

HOLY RUSSIA! The words are the key-note to every Russian life, and through them, memories of childhood bring back clearly some of the most wonderful of all my happy days. Holy Russia! In these two words are held, as in a priceless casket, some of the most subtle threads of Russian feeling.

Other lands have other ideals, but the true Russian,—especially the Russian of my childhood, responds most quickly by the heart-strings when the deeper notes of life are touched. Though many years have passed since the church itself has played any part in my life, the beauty and symbolism of the quaint forms and religious customs linger with me yet, and I feel anew the mystery and the enthusiasms

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of childhood come over me at the two words of magic—Holy Russia!

The great celebration is Eastertide, for in no country in the world does the Festival of the Resurrection take so deep a hold on the life of the people as it does in Russia. It is truly a season of joy, a time when every one is happy, when quarrels are forgotten, when enemies become friends and peace and good-will reign throughout the land.

When, in retrospect, I think of my happy boyhood in Little Russia, the remembrance of Eastertide brings me memories as of a Land of Holy Things and of a time of happiness and rejoicing.

The church was near our house, since the clergy in Russia were practically attached to the estates, so although we went there on big occasions, as a rule the services were held at home. During the long Lenten season (when the moujiks fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays for seven weeks) we all looked forward to Easter

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eve, when the joyous spirit of the season would become manifest after weeks and weeks of repression.

On the evening before Easter there was always a special church service, and at midnight the fast was broken with great rejoicing. In each household, for weeks before this night, the housewives were busy preparing the luscious special dishes —never eaten at any other time—with which Easter is associated in the minds of all Russians. During this period Ksenia was inexorable.

"You can't come into this kitchen," she announced every time we attempted raids, meanwhile standing solidly planted in the doorway.

"Ksenia, *golubushka*" (dear), pleaded Ivan, "just a peep!"

But even flattery never attained the desired end and we could do nothing but watch the dozens and dozens of eggs taken from our cellar, and see the pans of home-made cream-cheese taken to the forbidden

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territory of the kitchen. However, we did go to watch the little pigs being specially fattened for the occasion. It was all most thrilling.

As the great time drew near, we were allowed to take part in one special joy—the painting of the Easter eggs. The whole family gathered around the dining-room table, and for hours we sat dipping the eggs, mostly in cochineal, so that they were a bright red. Others were boiled with colored rags, and came out dyed with all the colors of the rainbow. There were many planned secrets.

"Vania," I would whisper to him, while Mother was out of the room, "help me write 'Mahma' on this egg—it's for her."

So Ivan lent his aid in tracing the letters on the egg in wax. When the egg was dipped it came out red all over, except where the writing was. We also often drew pictures or wrote inscriptions, and these came out so white and clear that the process was in itself a source of great ex-

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citement. Hundreds of eggs were prepared during the week before Easter, and each one of us had a surprise for every other member of the family.

At last the wonderful evening came. I still feel the thrill of expectancy and anticipation that pulsated through the neighborhood. As the dusk drew in, the peasants brought to the church, for a blessing, the food which was to be eaten when the fast was broken. There was a rough hedge around our little church, and beside this, on the ground, the people laid the roasted meats, the baked cakes and the Easter eggs they had prepared. After the midnight service the people went outside the church, and stood beside the food, each one holding a lighted candle. The still night, the hushed expectancy of the gathered peasants, the light streaming out from the church and the distant barking of dogs—it was Russia—the Russia of the happiest time of my life. But a rustle swept over the people.

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"*Batiushka* (Little Father) is coming!" went the whisper, as the tall, lanky figure of the priest appeared, clothed in flowing robes, with his servers in procession. He carried a small asperges or broom in his hand, and a server followed him with a vessel of Holy Water. As Batiushka passed between the rows and rows of food to be blessed, he dipped the asperges in the holy water and lightly sprinkled the offerings. And as he passed and returned to the church the tension of the mystery fled, and the people turned to each other with the glad words, "Christ is Risen!" They chatted excitedly and gradually dispersed, all carrying flickering candles and the food that had been blessed. The village was athrob with the sense of relief and joy; sounds of laughter and merriment filled the air, and the dark roads were alive with the moving candle-lights, the consecrated will-o'-the-wisps of the Russian people. As each family of serfs or peas-

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BATIUSHKA.

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ants entered the *izba*, the head of the family always made a cross of lampblack just inside the door, by holding the holy candle close to the whitewashed ceiling. Then the candles were put out and kept until the next year.

We, gathered in the big dining-room, also waited anxiously for the coming of Batiushka, for our food, as well, had to be blessed.

"He's coming!" We all rushed in with the news to our parents and the assembled relatives.

After the ceremony, Batiushka always remained to break his fast with us. The long dining-room table was covered with a home-made damask cloth, specially woven for this great occasion. The dishes stood on wonderful embroidered doilies, decorated with hand-made lace. Nothing was overlooked to make the festival different from every other season.

There was always a young pig, roasted whole, and stuffed with rice, prunes, and

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raisins. A young lamb was also prepared in the same way. Think of Ksenia's kitchen and the fire big enough to roast these whole! There were all kinds of fish, most of which had been caught near by, besides caviar from the Volga and all sorts of pickled dainties. Yet it was the Paskha, looming high above all the other delicacies, one of the national dishes of Russia, which I remember as the chief dish of Easter. Beside it always stood the cheese Paskha, another indispensable tribute to the season.

The Paskha is a kind of cake that stands about one and a half feet high on a base of eight inches. It goes straight up, and on top my mother would make shiny sugar decorations, and mould either a sugar lamb with a flag, or a sugar double cross. About sixty eggs were used to make the Paskha, and its taste was such as only the Russians know how to produce. Nowhere are the candies and cakes equal to those made in Russia.

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The cheese Paskha was made of our home-made cheese in the form of a truncated cone, with crosses moulded along the sides. These two Paskhas are the greatest delicacies in Russia, and no Easter is complete without them.

As decorations for the table, during Lent, Ksenia used to plant wheat and oats in small dishes, and these sprouted to make pretty green islands in the midst of the Easter feast.

Wherever there was room, stood dishes filled with colored Easter eggs of every tint and shade. Many of the eggs had our names written on them, while others were covered with designs and pictures. It was indeed a night of surprises.

On that great night, we children went to bed near morning, and Mother and Father did not retire at all. The next day the full spirit of joy and happiness reigned everywhere in Russia. Even to strangers the greeting was addressed: "Christ is Risen!" To which the re-

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sponse was made: "He is Risen, indeed!" The kiss of peace was always exchanged, and then each person took out an Easter egg and gave it as a token. No one went out without carrying Easter eggs. Many of the eggs were made of chocolate or other candy. Others were valuable, sometimes, indeed, being made of gold with precious stones, and these were used as gifts, like Christmas presents.

Always also there were wooden eggs inside wooden eggs, with yet smaller eggs inside, all brightly colored, for this delight of finding one thing inside the other is very general among Russian children. We had boxes inside boxes, sometimes as many as seven. The girls had wooden dolls inside wooden dolls, from a big doll two feet high to the littlest doll inside, perhaps not as big as a finger. And all were alike in shape.

On Easter morning the streets of the village were full of these old-time cus-

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toms, and nobody refused a greeting. In the house Father and Mother also received greetings from their peasants.

During the whole of Easter week the dining-room table was never cleared; Mother and Ksenia kept it supplied with a never-ceasing flood of dainties. On the first day after Easter we were visited by young people, who flocked to our house in dozens, often passing the night with us, for traveling was a difficult problem in those days of rough roads, and sometimes the snow was still on the ground. The second day was usually the day of visits on the part of the older people, who went to exchange greetings with their friends. The roads were musical with the tinkling of troika-bells, as callers sped from estate to estate at topmost speed.

With so many hard-boiled and prettily decorated eggs at our disposal, we spent a great part of Easter week playing games with the eggs (and eating them when

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they broke). We had many traditional games with them, the favorite being one in which a trough of boards was made, tipping slightly on the floor. A dozen eggs were then placed on the floor. Piotr, as eldest, set his eggs down first. Aniuta was usually given the initial chance to roll one of her eggs down the trough, to try to hit whichever egg of Piotr's row she most fancied. We all stood around expectantly, for the game was an uncertain one. If the eggs met without mishap, Aniuta won, but if one of the eggs cracked, the good egg went to the sufferer. It required skill to roll gently and in a straight line. We all battled for the possession of a special egg given every year by Father, and the one who was lucky enough to hit it, kept it for many months as a memory of the year's most glorious festival.

Since in Russia religious interpretations govern most festivals, birthdays were not celebrated. We did not look

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forward to our birthdays as do American children, but our "name days" were triumphantly celebrated. These brought us parties and presents. All our playmates were named after the saints of the calendar, so that each had a patron saint, with a special day assigned. Instead of having to write down birthday dates, if one knew a friend's name one could always send a gift or a message on the feast day of that saint after whom the friend had been named. On St. Vladimir's day, therefore, I always had a party. The boys from the neighboring families used to drive to the house and Ksenia strove her hardest to prepare good things in my honor.

Even in the most excitable "name-day" party the symbolism was not forgotten. An ikon hung in the corner of the dining-room. It was a painted representation of the Virgin Mary, with all the picture—save for the hands and face—covered with a gilt plaque. Before sitting

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down to table, we all crossed ourselves, turning slightly to the ikon. Mother poured out the Russian tea, taking the water from the boiling samovar, which stood on the table. It was like a large, brass urn, with a little stove in the centre of it in which charcoal burned, to keep the water boiling all the time. We had plenty of home-made jam, and the cakes abounded.

At last the feast came to an end, and every one was ready for a noisy game.

"Let's play blind-man's-buff," I shouted.

"Yes, yes, let's," everybody responded, for that was a game the zest of which never waned. But we did not jump up immediately. For one moment there was a silence, while we all crossed ourselves once more, and then we were free to go to our games.

There were also several ikons in the bedrooms, with incense-burners swung before them, suspended by a thin chain

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attached to the ceiling. In Mother's room there was a triangular table in the corner, on which ikons stood, with a light always burning before them, and a fald-stool, on which she knelt to pray. Religion was very simple in the Russia of my childhood, and it was universal. We were not taught reverence as such; we grew up in it. It was a part of our lives.

There were many other celebrations in which the church took part, but Russia is an old country, and many of the customs are far older than Christianity. They date back to a time when people believed in witches and sprites and evil fairies even more than they do now, and when they thought that the powers of darkness needed to be remembered and warded off. One such celebration, especially, is sharply defined in my memory. This is St. John's eve.

On June twenty-third, almost the longest day of the year, we children were allowed to stay up late to watch the fires

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of St. John, as they were burned through the evening by the peasants.

In our woods there was a "circle," believed to have been used for many centuries for this purpose, to which the peasants hauled brushwood. Ivan and I, always together, watched the dark figures with awe and fear. They were getting ready to make the fire, which would cleanse them from all evil spirits and sickness.

At last it burned. The flames rose high in the centre of the clearing, casting weird shadows on the assembled peasants in their bright-colored holiday costumes, and on the surrounding forest, sunk in the darkness of the warm, still night. I did not dare look behind, for I felt certain that between the faintly lighted trunks of the trees lurked those goblins about whom Nikola had told us so many tales. And yet I wanted to meet them.

As the fire crackled, the *divchata* and the *hloptzi* pressed close to it, and every

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sudden spark raised little subdued giggles and a little stampede.

"You go first—no, you—no ——" fluttered from one or the other of the eager peasants. All wanted to be clean from evil spirits and from disease, but it took courage to jump through the uncertain fire, with its hungry flames.

Old Nikola, the man who knew everything about the Unseen World, was the priest that night. Stern, with his fur cap firmly pulled over his forehead, he watched for the mysterious hour, when tradition allowed the beginning of the ceremony. "It's almost one hour before midnight," he announced solemnly, and the tense excitement grew.

I pressed closer to Ivan, watching the fire and the dark background beyond. The hour of fairies was fast approaching, the hour when they came to earth. I longed and yet I dreaded to catch a glimpse of the dream-beings, flitting in the darkness beyond.

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"It is time," said Nikola, suddenly, guessing the moment by some instinct, for he had no other means at hand. "Who goes first—you, Stepan?"

And with this direct challenge before him, I saw my old friend, Stepan, step forward before the fire and hesitate.

"Go on—jump!" came the encouraging whispers.

The fire crackled and sent bright sparks among the encircling people, and he jumped, leaving in the fire both evil and disease. The peasant girls followed, with embroidered skirts held tight, while on the other side of the cleansing fire waited those who were willing and ready to catch the jumper, and to beat out the little sparks that settled on the clothing.

Holy Russia! The Russia of tradition and fairy tales, the Russia which was a part of us when we, too, jumped the sparkling fires on St. John's Eve.

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Photograph by Gilbert H. Grosvenor,
Editor National Geographic Magazine.

"HOLY RUSSIA."

A devout Russian stopping to cross himself as he passes a shrine; a very common sight.

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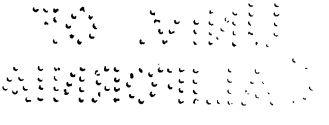

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CHAPTER IV

THE DAYS OF THE SCHOOL TYRANT

In my childhood there were no schools with primary classes. Admission to the gymnasium, which corresponds to the eighth and ninth grades of the American school, the high school, and the first two years at college, was only secured by the passing of an entrance examination at about the age of ten. Accordingly, we had to receive all our preparatory training at home. This system has since been changed, for there are now two preparatory classes for children under ten, so that they can prepare their entrance examinations at school, instead of at home.

It was the custom among the nobles to keep a resident tutor for their children, as a member of the household during the period of preparation. My parents, how-

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ever, could not afford this expense, for our estate, though ample, was not large, in comparison with Russian estates, and it took good management to derive sufficient income from it. We lived a long way from any city, and there were no transportation facilities.

Thus it followed that my two brothers, my sisters, and myself were given our preparatory training at home first from Mother, who made time to superintend our studies, in spite of her numerous household duties. Mother was a highly cultured woman, speaking several languages, and was a musician besides. Batiushka, the priest on the estate, did his share in teaching us. We were required to learn elementary arithmetic, grammar and composition, our prayers and the catechism.

Every morning, for at least two hours, we studied. Father's military ideas prevailed on the question of time, and nothing was allowed to interfere with our

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educational routine. I was always impatient of my morning lessons, for I wanted to be out-of-doors in summer, climbing trees and swimming; in winter, skating and battling in the snow. Of course I knew that I had to pass the gymnasium examination, so when I was in class I applied myself to my work. Both Mother and Batiushka were strict, and while the range of studies we took up was not large, it was very thorough. Batiushka was gentle and we were quite fond of him, but his quizzes are still to be remembered.

Batiushka, which, as I said before, means "little father," was the title by which our tutor-clergyman was known. Every priest is Batiushka to his flock, for he is regarded as the father who takes care of them all. Our Batiushka, whose small church and house were quite near us, always wore cotton trousers, tucked into high boots that reached to his knees, with a long coarsely-woven cassock, that reached from his chin almost to his

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ankles. Neither his hair nor his beard ever were cut, according to the rule of the church, so both were long, and his hair hung down his back in straggling curls. Besides his visits to the school-room, he was a frequent guest at our house in the evenings.

When Batiushka came to instruct us in the catechism and prayers, he had to teach us a new language, and this added a great deal to our labors for the gymnasium entrance examinations. The Russian Bible and all the prayers are written in Old Slavonic, which is so old a form of Russian that it is different from it in many ways. The words were different, and even the letters were shaped strangely, but we had to learn to read it fluently from the original text. This meant much work and study, far more than I ever wanted to do, but Mother was always ready to help us, for it would have been a terrible disgrace had any of us failed in the examinations.

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When, at the age of ten, I went for my examination, my excitement was great, and when it was known that I had passed and was actually entered as a pupil in the first class, I felt that I was quite grown up.

At last came the day when I was to leave Luka-Barskaya to go to the gymnasium at Nemirov, a small town in the same government.

"It's quite a long drive," explained Ivan to me, as we drove away in charge of the coachman, Stepan, "but I'll show you everything, and you won't mind being away from home a bit. I didn't, when I went."

Nemirov, in 1858, when I went there for the first time, belonged to a very old Polish noble, Count Felix Pototzky. He had given the necessary funds for the building of the gymnasium, which was only accessible, in those days, to the sons of the nobility and privileged classes. No provision had yet been made for the

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education of the serfs, though to-day vast efforts are being made to give opportunities to the peasants.

I remember Count Pototzky as an old man, always heavily scented, who held a prominent position at the Court of the Tsar. Consequently, he spent his winters in Petrograd at the Court, and his summers in his Palazzo in Nemirov. This was a mansion surrounded by a wide park, in which an orchestra played on fine evenings, and which was open to the people of the town, who went there in large numbers. The park was traversed by many flower-bordered alleys that meandered among the green lawns and glades of woodland. When Ivan took me around, the first thing he showed me was the playground next to the gymnasium.

"Count Pototzky has given all these things, too," he explained, showing me a bewildering array of swings and nets. "See those nets, spread above the ground? Well, those are for jumping on,—this

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way," and I found myself alone, while Vania jumped like a monkey on the large nets, spread over a great distance, that bounced him up into the air like an elastic ball. I did not need much encouragement to join him, or to learn the use of the swings and giant strides.

The houses in Nemirov were mostly built of wood with thatched straw roofs, and nearly all of them were surrounded by huge gardens. In summer the streets were so dusty that we traveled to the gymnasium through clouds of dust, and we fancied ourselves a company of hussars on the charge.

In winter-time the mud was so deep that we had to wear high boots, and I still feel the delight with which Ivan and I used to wade into the middle of the street, where the mud was deepest. We played that it was lava from a volcano.

These high boots were almost universally worn in Russia, both by children and by grown-up people, partly because

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it was a custom, and partly because of the deep mud on the streets of provincial towns. The boots are still worn, although there has been a vast improvement in the condition of the roads.

We reached school at nine o'clock in the morning and were not let out until three o'clock in the afternoon, with only an allowance of half an hour for dinner, and recesses of ten minutes between lessons. Many of the boys brought sandwiches for dinner, but Ivan and I used to race home, for the house where we boarded through the term was not far from school. Ivan was a better runner than I, but that sharp trot every day through dust, or mud, or snow built up my wind amazingly. Almost the only exercise we had during school term was that which we undertook for ourselves, for we had none of the school sports that are so wide-spread in England, and—to a less degree—in America. We had a large courtyard in the school, where we played

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ball in summer. One of our favorite games was *lutka*, which is the Russian name for baseball, played similarly to the American game, except that we had no coaching or training. Another game that absorbed us was *stenka*, a kind of hand-ball, except that we played it without rules, and very much as we pleased. In winter we waged battles with snowballs, which were so fierce that the teachers did not dare show themselves in the yard for fear of well-aimed "bullets" hitting them.

The work at school was hard and the conditions under which it had to be done were more than unpleasant. We were treated almost like convicts, and the teachers handled us just as they pleased.

"Hey, you, porridge-eating beetles! Keep quiet! Silence!" would shout old Volkovsky, our teacher of arithmetic, when we became too noisy. But we did not stop.

"Ha! Whew!" he would spit on the floor, then get up from his desk.

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We all knew that if old Volkovsky got up for any other reason than that of going to the blackboard, we were going to have trouble. Immediate silence reigned—the silence before a storm. With bated breath, not daring to move, we waited for the hurricane to descend on some one of us. Suddenly a blow would whizz through the air, and we turned in time to see the head of one of our comrades banging helplessly against the desk, as old Volkovsky hit the culprit.

Teacher Gishman, who taught French and German, used a ruler as a means of corporal punishment. He always called out four boys at a time for questions, and made them stand in a row before him.

"Vinegar?" he asked. If the answer was not instantaneous, he passed on to the next.

"Quicker — you — you!" When all had failed, he shouted: "Give me your paws, you scoundrels."

"*Es-sig*," he hissed between his teeth

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as his ruler came down on the hand of the first boy.

"*Es-sig*," he repeated with acerbity, as he raised the ruler on the next boy. When he had finished, the four boys returned to their seats with red faces, while four new victims, with pale faces, were called out. After his lessons our hands were swollen and red, as if we had been playing two of our favorite ball games, *stenka* and *kasha*, after which our hands often were so swollen that we could not bend the fingers.

Our reading teacher, Antonikovsky, found vent for his temper in an entirely different way.

"You, pig's ear, read," he commanded, poking the boy thus addressed in the back.

"You dirty snout, sitting next to the pig's snout, repeat what I said!" and the boy at whom his finger was pointed was compelled to repeat the words. He had a perfectly marvelous imagination, and

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there was little repetition in his epithets, for he always invented new ones. When he lost his temper he used to catch the culprit by the ear and squeeze very hard.

I cannot deny that we made so much noise that we could not even hear ourselves talk. When recess was announced, I remember one of the boys, Cherkassky, jumping up on a bench, and stamping hard with both feet, shouting, "*Pe-re-me-na!*" "Re-ce-e-ess!" We would take up the cry in different tones, and the teacher, with his fingers in his ears, hurriedly left the class room. Suddenly, amid the hubbub—like a bomb—Overseer Korssun entered and grabbed all the boys close to him by the hair. We dodged, like sheep, the blows that were showered on us.

At intervals Inspector Delsal arrived in the class room, followed by the janitor, Ossiatovsky, with a bunch of *rozgi* or rods, and placing a stool in front of the benches, began whipping the noisy ones.

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The state of affairs in the gymnasia of Russia had become a national scandal, and efforts were made to reform these conditions. A year after my entrance into this atmosphere of continuous abuse and corporal punishment, the system was entirely changed, after which we were never abused and whipped, although the spirit in the gymnasium was anything but peaceful. The rough discipline, however, taught us boys a few things. It taught us to combine against the teachers, and many a bitter practical joke was played on them, not slight jests, but affairs that were flavored with revenge and hate. The seeds of hatred toward those in power were sown at school. We had heard rumors of the coming change, but not even the most sanguine of us believed that the Pirogoff reform would be as sweeping as it was. The masters were ordered to treat the pupils with respect, and instead of the raucous "you" or even insulting epithets, they were required to

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address us by name with the prefix *Gospodin* or Master. This shows how utterly the point of view had changed. It was a marvelous reform, but it was too sudden.

After the trusteeship of Pirogoff, to whom every one of us owed a debt of gratitude, Baron Nicholas obtained the position, and having been brought up in the schools of the old style, he believed that rough handling led to manliness. He tried to restore the old system, but this was impossible. We had learned that school could be managed without brutality, and the effort to force it on us again led to revolt. The feeling between the boys and the masters became even more bitter.

At this time an insurrection broke out in Poland, which, once having been a great and important kingdom, has always been impatient and resentful of being merely a Russian province. The Poles were anxious to shake off some of the hardships imposed on them by Russia,

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one of which was the refusal of the government to allow Polish in schools. In Nemirov, most of the nobility were Polish, while the peasants were *katzapi* or Little Russian. The Polish noblemen organized themselves and their trusted followers into a militia which used arson as a weapon. This caused the Russian government to take strong measures to crush the rebellion and prevent further burning of houses.

Nemirov became an armed centre, the streets were filled with soldiers and every house was watched. The officers searched all the homes in which they suspected the presence of revolutionary literature. It was a very exciting time, and the political unrest permeated our schoolrooms, where most of the boys were sons of Polish nobles, with a minority of Little Russians. I remember seeing gendarmes or police peeping into houses through the cracks in the shades in an effort to find evidence of incriminating activities.

That vacation, when Stepan came to

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drive us three boys home, he was frightened.

"Piotr Karpovitch," he said to the eldest of us, "the people are attacking all the *Pani* (nobles)."

"But we're not Polish *Pani*, we're Russian," answered Piotr in bewilderment. Nevertheless, we had to get home, so we started on our eventful journey.

To reach Luka-Barskaya we had to pass about ten villages, and at the very first one, trouble began. As we approached, some of the peasant guards closed the village gates, thus barring the road, while others, with clubs in their hands, rushed out of the guard-house, shouting:

"Stop!" at the same time catching the bridles of the horses.

Our horses, frightened by this unusual treatment, lurched from side to side, with their heads thrown back, whereupon one of the guards used his club on their heads

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A Peasant Village.

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to quiet them down. This only increased their panic. Meanwhile the rest of the guards, having closed the gates, began shouting and demanding our passports. Until these were produced and read to the satisfaction of the men, who now realized that we were Russians and not Poles, there was so much abuse and noise that we were almost deaf.

Had this happened only once we might not have felt the journey so disturbing, but the same scene was repeated in the following three villages. We were already beginning to think that we would get home with nothing worse than abuse and noisy demonstrations, when we reached a larger village, where the guards were apparently even fiercer.

"Stop!" yelled the guard, daring to point his bayonet at us.

We stopped, but the horses, now driven to a panic fear, began plunging wildly from side to side, dragging the carriage with them.

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"Stop!" yelled a chorus of armed guards, running up to the swaying carriage.

But the horses would not stop. A roar of orders issued from the men and some of them made a rush at the carriage, with their clubs raised, while others did their best to terrify further the already panic-stricken horses. A one-sided battle ensued, in which the guards belabored the horses, and battered the carriage with peasant stupidity, seeming to think that it, too, was responsible for the disobedience of orders.

"What do you want, you fools?" shouted Piotr vainly through the deafening tumult. "We're Russians!"

But his words were drowned in the yells of the men, to which was now added the furious barking of a dozen fierce village dogs.

"Your passports," yelled the attacking guards, ignoring the fact that Piotr had held them ready for several minutes.

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One of the guards came forward through the struggling mob, when unexpectedly there was a sharp crack, and the carriage listed to one side. The shaft was broken.

A sudden silence fell over the whole crowd when it became apparent that damage had been done. Arms that had been brandished were dropped, the ring-leaders, who had been so domineering and valiant a moment before, pulled off their caps and stood shamefaced. Like boisterous children, who have done something wrong, they hung their heads, silenced, confused and back to the tame obedience of the servile peasant. The man with the bayonet hastily grabbed the passports.

"We didn't know who you were, *Baritchi* (masters)," he said, glancing guiltily at the broken shaft, around which a few of the men had gathered. "We'll see what we can do to fix it up for you."

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CHAPTER V

SETTING THE SLAVES FREE

I WAS thirteen years old when the Great Change was made in Russia. Perhaps the greatest single act ever ordered by any ruler in all the world's history was that of Tsar Alexander II in freeing the serfs in 1861. Over fifty million serfs, or more than one-half of his empire, he released from bondage. Thus, before Abraham Lincoln's emancipation proclamation was made, Russia had set her slaves free, of whom more than twelve times as many were liberated by one imperial ukase or order as were made free by the Civil War.

Serfdom had always existed vaguely in Russia, and definitely so since the seventeenth century. Father explained to me that the system was the result of the need

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of the nobility to keep laborers on their lands, instead of allowing them to wander from place to place. For the good of the country it was advisable that the land should have people steadily employed in cultivating it, so little by little different Imperial Ukases or edicts granted special privileges to the nobility. Father, for example, had rights of life and death over the serfs on our small estate of Luka-Barskaya.

Alexander II not only set the serfs free, but he also bought three hundred and fifty million acres of land from the landowners and turned it over to the villages, giving them fifty years to pay for it. The peasants found it hard to understand why they should pay for land on which they had always lived. The freedom manifesto created a storm of discontent, frequently ending in riots. Finally the question of settling the local difficulties of the liberation was given into the hands of committees of nobles,

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organized in every "government," called the Arbiters of Peace.

Well I remember the noisy meetings of the neighboring nobles in our house, and the endless discussions about the rights of the serfs.

The serfs themselves were so ignorant that it was very difficult to make them understand the extent of their freedom, and the fact that they had to pay for the land they were given. It was that which they never understood, for it seemed to them that since they had always lived on it, it was their own. I remember that Father spent a great deal of time explaining to them the different points of the edict, while they, gathered in our courtyard, asked him numerous questions.

It was this inability to understand the Imperial Ukase which led to trouble and riots, and in many localities the situation became very serious. On the estate of Count Kushelev-Bezborodko, who was

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our neighbor, these disorders among the peasants led to fearful reprisals on the part of the soldiers, who punished severely the leaders of the riots.

The liberation made little impression on me, because we had no trouble at all in Luka-Barskaya. We only heard of the riots that occurred in many places, often resulting in the burning of barns and other needless violence.

The Arbiters of Peace came to Luka-Barskaya and found but little to do, for the serfs trusted Father. Stern and silent though he was, the moujiks knew that he had always been a just master, and at this critical time not a single serf on our estate showed disloyalty.

In the household the liberation made little outward difference, for, by the ukase, the *domoviye*, or house serfs, were obliged to serve for two years longer. So, aside from the fact that during the whole summer the courtyard was full of groups of peasants talking noisily together, the

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freedom of the serfs affected me very slightly. Little did I know, then, that it was the beginning of a chain of events which would lead me into hourly peril and a hunted life.

How serious the peasant riots had been we learned when Ivan and I returned to the gymnasium and donned again the familiar school uniform.

In Russian schools the wearing of uniforms was general. We had a dark-blue uniform, with scarlet collars and bright brass buttons, and a cap to match. In this we studied and played, and later, when I entered the University, I still had the uniform, although its cut was different. We were allowed to wear other clothing indoors, but we could not leave the house except in our uniforms.

In spite of the reforms in the gymnasium, the conditions were still hateful, and these were made worse by the marriage of Count Pototzky's daughter to Count Strogonov, a Russian, who was

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Photograph by Gilbert H. Grosvenor,
Editor National Geographic Magazine.

BOYS WILL BE BOYS.

Two schoolboys have stayed behind to have a playful contest while their comrades have crowded into the Cathedral.

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economical to stinginess. He abolished all the swings and nets, which had been our great joy, and also raised the rentals of the houses in Nemirov. Gradually people left the town, for its old charm was gone, and as time passed on, the treatment in the gymnasium again became coarse and humiliating. Ivan and Piotr prevailed upon Father to allow them to be transferred to the gymnasium at Kamanetz-Podolsk, where I followed them shortly afterwards.

There, at first, conditions were more bearable. As it unfortunately chanced, however, just before we had been transferred, a serious riot around the school had occurred, during which the boys had fought the police, and two men with a reputation for brutality were sent for the purpose of definitely establishing order in the gymnasium. Sixty of the culprits were expelled, which was a frequent method of punishment, and we were rigidly watched. Inspector Tulub, in his

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search for dangerous boys, picked out Ivan as an "undesirable," for so much did he talk about liberty and progress that Tulub felt he was likely to be a firebrand and resent authority.

One evening Ivan came in quite excited.

"Volodia," he said, closing my bedroom door tightly, and speaking in a whisper, "do you know what I saw? . . . Tulub sneaking around Dunavsky's house, listening at his window and trying to peep into the room. . . . What do you think of that?—It's worse than Nemirov. I'll let him know what I think of him some day!"

Another time Tulub raided the home of one of our comrades in the hope of finding some "revolutionary" literature. Often in class he came up to the boys, saying roughly: "Arms up," and then he went through their pockets. I could never even imagine what it was he hoped to find, for at that time I did not know

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about the movement toward democracy that became known as Nihilism, and which was already vaguely in the air in certain universities, but there was no restraining Ivan at all when this spying began.

"It's unjust," he said excitedly, after one of these searches. "What right has he to do as he pleases? I won't stand for it! It's an insult!"

Ivan was not only older than I, but he was old for his years, and life made a deeper impression on him than it did on me. He was more sensitive, also, so at every fresh outrage there was added another spark of indignation. He took still more to reading, and spent all his pocket money buying books. It was a year before his graduation that he showed me one evening his new treasures—two sets of Belinsky and Dobroliubov, both Russian classics.

"Vania, I'm glad," I said, looking at the handsome volumes; "you've wanted them for years."

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"Yes," he agreed; "won't it be fun reading them out loud at home during vacations?"

"By the way, Vania," I continued, after examining the books, "didn't you have a row with Tulub this morning? One of the boys told me he heard something about it."

"It wasn't much," Ivan answered. "He's looking for trouble—I suppose he doesn't think me safe, so he made some remark about my uniform this morning. I told him he didn't know anything about it, so then he made some more remarks. Well, I can stand a good deal, but I won't tolerate public insult. . . . I told him exactly what I thought of him."

I wondered just what Ivan had said, for I knew that he was utterly reckless once his pride was roused. It made me uneasy. Another day Tulub made trouble for Ivan because he wore high boots, to which he took exception.

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"Don't let me see you in them again," he bellowed at Ivan.

"I'll wear them as long as I please," was the calm reply.

All through that year and the next—which was Ivan's final year at the gymnasium—this system of persistent nagging and public insult continued. It did not surprise any one, accordingly, that the final break was both sudden and stormy.

Unfortunately Ivan had also had trouble with the governor of the government, Goremykin. There was a rule that all the gymnasium boys must take off their hats upon meeting the governor. One day Ivan met him in the street outside the town, and did not take off his hat, whereupon the governor stopped him and demanded his name.

"I gave him my name," said Ivan in telling me about it, "although I don't see why he was so touchy."

Again I was troubled, for I had heard that Goremykin was petty about for-

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malities, and that he never forgave an affront.

At last the time came for Ivan's final examinations, which would give him his diploma for entrance to the University. He was so clever, and had made so brilliant a record in his classes that I never doubted his success, and I awaited the details of the examination without anxiety.

But the unexpected happened. The oral examination was held before the Pedagogical Committee, and Inspector Tulub was in charge of the proceedings. As soon as Ivan entered he was spotted by Tulub, who felt that this was his last chance to make trouble.

"You haven't shaved this morning," he shouted angrily, referring to the slight down on Ivan's face, and regardless of the fact that the committee was present.

Ivan's outraged sense of propriety got the best of his temper.

"It is stupid," he answered loudly, "for you to spend your time examining

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the cut of our coats, and looking to see if we have shaved or not—those are small things, and I think you would be more useful if you took a greater interest in our mental development."

This frank speech only roused Tulub, who began yelling and shouting abuse at Ivan in the old-time way, without any restraint on either his language or the pitch of his voice.

"You won't get your diploma!" he finished hoarsely.

"I don't care a rap for your diploma," said Ivan angrily, and marched out of the room.

Then the storm broke. The whole episode was taken as being a sign of Ivan's unstable revolutionary ideas. The governor remembered his own unpleasant meeting with Ivan, and also took a hand in the matter, with the result that for about four days Ivan was constantly and persistently dogged by spies, who watched his every movement.

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"The funniest thing about this," said Ivan, laughing, after he had come in from a walk to the bookstore, "is the way everybody runs when they catch sight of me. Why, Nemorsky made a dive for a side street to-day, so as to avoid speaking to me." I knew that our friends could do nothing else. Not only did they fear to show him sympathy, but they were even afraid of admitting friendship with him, as it would have harmed them, and done him no good.

"I'm avoided as if I had the plague," he said bitterly one evening, in telling me of his experiences.

The school authorities and the governor went into the details of the whole incident, and it was several days before they arrived at a decision. Finally one day a carriage drove up to our door for the purpose of taking Ivan home to Luka-Barskaya. A gendarme fully armed was one of the party, and it was his duty to see that the recalcitrant

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schoolboy reach his home without any attempts at escape.

This incident had a definite influence on me. I loved Ivan as few brothers love a brother, and the fact that he had been unjustly expelled made me hate the authorities with a deep and bitter hatred that nothing could soften or eradicate. I became proud of the fact that I had a brother who had been sent home under the supervision of a gendarme, for I felt it was an honor to be at war with those who had no regard for our dignity, or any interest in our success. It was then that were laid the first seeds of that struggle against injustice and against unintelligent authority which was to change the entire course of my life. I really left careless boyhood behind on the day that Ivan was expelled.

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CHAPTER VI

CHOOSING A CAREER

I PASSED my final examinations and received my diploma in 1866, five years after the freeing of the serfs. Immediately the problem of choosing a career in life faced me, for the estate did not provide enough means for us three boys. My drive home, with the diploma in my possession, was a triumphant one. Everybody was waiting for me in the courtyard, and the carriage had no sooner entered the gates than I shouted, "I've passed, hooray!"

Mother kissed me proudly, and I was the hero for several days.

Still the horror of my schooldays hung over me like a nightmare, and many times did I wake with a feeling of dread

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that another day of trouble and insult was before me. Then, with a start, I remembered that I was at home, and that my gymnasium days were over, whereupon I went to sleep again with profound relief.

That autumn I became a student in the University of Kiev, which is one of the best in all Russia. My plans for the future were quite vague, so I entered the Physico-Mathematical faculty, principally because I was very fond of mathematics. At that time the only open avenues of work to a man of rank and education were the army and government. For the former, a large personal income was necessary to support an officer's position and the routine of departmental work did not appeal to me, so I left the final decision for the future, and meanwhile studied hard and did a great deal of reading. Just at this time the spirit in the University was very dead and lacked vigor and enthusiasm. Many of the

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more active students had participated in the Polish Revolution and had been sent to Siberia. Those who had remained, therefore, were the less advanced. During the day we attended our lectures, and at night we either read or joined small student societies; the athletic side of college—which means so much in America—was absolutely unknown at the University of Kiev at that time. We had no time for sports, for the work to be done was more than three times as much as in a modern American college. I had not lost my love for games, however, and I became quite an expert in both chess and billiards.

Most of the students were poor, for their parents were only moderately well-to-do, and they had to train for a profession; whereas the sons of rich families remained landowners. We organized a mutual dining-room, to which all contributed. We also founded a mutual aid association, which enabled us to care for those com-

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rades who were having particular difficulty in struggling along through college. Gradually it became a matter of pride to be poor, and those students who had plenty of money never displayed it, for it was considered bad form. We thought it a sign of intelligence for a student to be plainly dressed, and to live simply. Those who were dudes were despised, and were not admitted to our circles and societies.

At the time I did not realize that we were adopting a new attitude in this determination to live the simple life. It was utterly sincere, and it taught us to share equally, it gave a real object in the vague ideals of youth, and, in my case, it laid another stone in the wall of democracy, which I was already building.

Three of my fellow students and I lived in a big room, for it was the custom among us to live together whenever possible. There were many advantages in this arrangement, for not only did it

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make our expense smaller, but it made life more interesting and less lonely.

We paid eight roubles a month for this room, which is equivalent to about four dollars. Our landlord, Zimenko, was a good-natured old man, whose sole duty was to light the samovar for us.

We started a small library of our own after we had attended to the more imperative needs of our student body, but although this was never more than a name during my student days, it proved to be a turning point. All our books together only filled six shelves, or rather plain boards, which had been nailed against the wall. As the two top shelves were taken up by numerous volumes on naval strategy, donated by somebody at the time of our opening, there was little room left for any very extensive collection. Moreover there was a particularly fine library at the University, which was at the entire disposal of all the students, so there was no real need for our own six shelves of books,

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GENERAL VIEW OF TOLSTOI'S HOME.

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except that we all liked the feeling that this was really our own library.

"Vladimir," said Sergius, my roommate, coming in one evening with mystery written all over him, "the police are watching our library. They've already got Zimenko under their thumb."

This was serious news. It was clear that the authorities suspected us. Since there were thousands of volumes in the college library, why should we have books unless they were of a forbidden character, they thought. We called a meeting hastily. Sergius, who was of a cautious habit, was willing to give up the library, but the rest of us, young and full of fight, were actually glad that we had an opportunity of being defiant. As for me, Ivan's expulsion from the gymnasium had settled for good and all the question of my relation to authority. I was a rebel against injustice, and I had grown to hate spying.

Our library had no revolutionary works

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in it, but we felt there was a principle involved. We were none of us revolutionists then, we were loyal Russians with a deep love for our own country, and a boyish belief that we could set everything right. This was still during the early part of the reign of Alexander II, the Tsar who had freed the serfs, and we felt that the spying and the misunderstandings were due to ignorant officials, not to the government. To ourselves, in a hot-headed (and as I now see, a youthful and immature) way, we made an issue of that library, and even those out-of-date and useless books on naval strategy became priceless possessions. This determination to fight for a principle is deeply rooted in Russian character, as deeply rooted as the desire to succeed is in America. So the right to have books of my own became to me as a banner of liberty under which I was willing to fight.

The idea of democracy became more and more real to us. Since we were ac-

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cused of having forbidden books, we might as well have them. Books that told about the French Revolution, stories of the American War of Independence, discussion about the life of working people, all these were denied us. In Russia, to-day, there is no such censorship, but this was at a time when the country was in a ferment. We got those books smuggled in across the frontier, and largely because they were forbidden fruit, we devoured them.

Every vacation I went home to Luka-Barskaya, where I spent happy weeks with my parents and Ivan, who lived at home for several years after being expelled from the gymnasium. During the day I used to wander about our estate with a book under my arm, or, frequently, I would take my gun, and bring home game for the table. Ivan had built up a library of picked books, so after supper, seated around the long oak table, he read aloud.

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Thus, during those quiet evenings of reading and discussion, the friendship between Father, Ivan, and myself became one of the most vital ties in my life.

While I was studying mathematics, Ivan spent about one year and a half studying music and literature. I still have a book of Ivan's poems. He went to Warsaw and took up music at the Conservatory, and after remaining there a year, he transferred to Petrograd, where he continued his musical education. While he was studying he became interested in a model cheese factory, which had been organized on special lines. This appealed to him as being feasible for our own estate, and he returned home to start something similar in Luka-Barskaya.

The first problem was the organization of a model farm, and he began with the intensive cultivation of a stretch of about fifty dessiatin, or one hundred and twelve acres, which was the nucleus of the tilled

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portion of the estate. His plan was to help the ignorant moujiks by showing them modern methods of agriculture.

I spent my next vacations working with Ivan, and incidentally learning a great deal about the life of the people. I had always imagined that the moujik, being accustomed to hard labor, did not feel physical exhaustion, as did we who were unused to physical work.

"Volodia," Ivan said, shaking me out of my sleep before sunrise during the summer vacations, "are you going with me to haymaking?"

"Yes," I answered, "I'll be with you in a few minutes."

As the early morning sun rose, we were on the field, together with the peasants, each with his scythe, one a certain distance back of the other. At a signal everybody began work, and we had to keep together. Although I was very strong physically, a few hours of this work soon exhausted me. At the

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end of the day I was nearly dead, and realized that an overplus of physical work absolutely prohibited mental advancement.

Unfortunately Ivan's attempt failed because the people themselves were too ignorant to support him, and also because he did not have enough money with which to equip the undertaking. Indeed it would have required years of patient education to teach the moujiks a system new to all their traditions, so our estate continued to be worked as it had been worked for many centuries, and Ivan's versatile mind turned to the question of organizing a colony, where he could carry out his ideals. Later, this crystallized into a plan for establishing this colony in America and Ivan joined me in Kiev to gather members for his project. This plan fell through, as none of the members would leave Russia.

Meanwhile, in my desire to help the peasantry, I realized that I could do

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little for them by my study of mathematics, so in 1869, three years after entering the University, I changed my faculty and began the study of medicine, knowing that there was a great need of doctors among the ignorant peasantry. Our student body had received a strong impetus toward the organization of literary clubs by the arrival of a number of medical students, who had been expelled from the Medical Academy in Petrograd.

Our new literary organizations multiplied so rapidly that it took up much of our time to attend the meetings. We all had our pet ideas, and spent much time trying to convince each other. Many of the ideas were absurd, all were extreme, but they were honest and sincere. The university students believed themselves almost the prophets of a new age, and many of them laid down their lives because of their eagerness to make the world better for the downtrodden moujik. It

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was folly, of course, but it was a splendid folly, and those college boys thought like heroes and lived and died like heroes.

I was as much of a fanatic as any of them, and my pet theory was that physical labor was the only true kind of work, and that if every one would live simply and work with his hands, all the evils that come from too great wealth and from poverty would cease. We were fanatical, just as the Crusaders were fanatical. No one could advise us, for we would not listen to more cautious men. We thought them cowards to refuse to join our plans, and did not trust them with our secrets.

Believing as I did, I determined to live up to my ideas. I gave up my university course, though I had spent six years there, three in the mathematics faculty, and three in medicine, declaring that there would be no college faculty degrees in the new age when labor would be all in all, and began my work of lead-

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ing the peasants to higher and better things than their hard-working lot. Meantime, I learned shoemaking as a trade, that I might truly practise what I preached.

I was never happier than then. It was a time of wonder, of serene ideals and of close comradeship with others who only wished to help their fellow men. Our plans were little more than dreams, then, they were so vague and impracticable, but no Knights of the Round Table ever bore more nobly "the flower of a blameless life" than my fellow idealists of the University of Kiev.

Setting aside our rank as nobles, foregoing every privilege, spending only the money we earned, the university students of that time sacrificed everything to this cause. A trip that I made to Switzerland, in company with Donetzky and a few student friends, crystallized my ideas, and I returned a revolutionist in the true sense of the word. Looking back now, I

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can hardly understand how we expected to sway all Russia set against us, small handful as we were. Yes, it was a dream that we could wipe out all class barriers, and make the world anew, a dream that may yet come true, but never, never in my time. Every boy dreams that way, a little; we tried to make the dream come true immediately.

Less than two months after my return from Switzerland the threatening storm broke over my head. I had been active among our peasants at Luka-Barskaya, stirring them up to a belief that in some way they were being robbed of their rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." I had then gone so far that I was preparing to organize the peasants into a revolutionary army. I smile now at our quixotic attempts, we were so few and Russia so immense. But the day had come whereupon I smiled no more. The iron hand of power was already knocking on the gate.

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Donetzky, who had remained abroad after I had returned home, wrote to me that he was on his way back to Russia, and that he would come for a few days to stay with us at Luka-Barskaya.

The shortest cut was along the railroad line, which he followed, although it was against the law. Misfortune tracked him, for he encountered a gang of workmen in charge of a foreman, who threatened him with arrest. Knowing what was in the package he carried, Donetzky did not dare to risk arrest and search. There was only one thing to do, and that was to run. He started, and would have escaped easily, but that he tripped on a railroad tie and hurt his foot. He was caught and taken to the nearest police station.

By an evil chance, at a place near his attempted escape, a murder had just been committed, so Donetzky, being a stranger, was questioned very closely, and his package was opened. It contained a number of printed leaflets, addressed to

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"Russian Revolutionists." The mere possession of these was a crime in Russia.

"I've come from abroad," explained Donetzky, "but I ran short of money, so I was walking to Moscow."

His suit-case, left at the station, was brought in, and when it was opened it was found to contain hundreds and hundreds of the revolutionary leaflets, as well as a number of books.

On the fly-leaf of one of them was written my name.

All this had happened about eight versts (five and a half miles) from home, so I knew nothing about it.

That night, about three A. M., I was awakened by a light in my room. I opened my eyes. Before me stood Father with a lighted candle, and just behind him stood the commissary of rural police and a gendarme.

"Vladimir De Bogory Mokrievitch," said the commissary, "a government criminal, Donetzky, was caught to-day,

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and we have evidence against you. We must search the house."

"Certainly," I responded calmly.

But through my mind rushed a bevy of questions. I wondered if there were any forbidden pamphlets in the house. Fortunately Ivan and Mother were not at home.

Nothing was found, so we all gathered at daybreak around the long oak table, where, with a steaming samovar, tea was served during a drawing-up of the papers, which I had to sign. The commissary, under the influence of the tea, became communicative, and told me the details of Donetzky's arrest. I immediately realized that his crime was a serious one in the eyes of the Russian police, and that it was an oversight on the part of the commissary not to have arrested me at once, for mere acquaintance with Donetzky, under such circumstances, would have been considered sufficient cause for arrest. It was morning before

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the police left our house, and then I decided to vanish.

"I'm certain that the authorities will rectify the commissary's slip," I said to Father, "and then they'll arrest me. I must get away."

I spent that day in nervous apprehension, for I could not escape in the daytime, as I feared the peasants might have been instructed to watch my movements, so I postponed my flight till dark.

That night, after ten o'clock, I left the home of my childhood and was driven to a distant railroad station by our trusted coachman, Stepan, where I took a train to Kiev. Two days later the gendarmes descended upon Luka-Barskaya. I was gone. No one knew where I was. A secret order for my arrest was sent broadcast, and I became a fugitive. I could never again use my own passport. I could not appear anywhere without forged documents, but had to live with friends

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who could secrete me even from the janitor, sometimes from their own servants.

I was an "illegal." I had become one of the hunted.

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CHAPTER VII

THE THUNDERBOLT OF TERRORISM

ALTHOUGH Donetzky's only crime had been that pamphlets dealing with the life-conditions of the peasants and similar so-called "revolutionary" writings were found in his possession, he was taken to Petrograd and condemned to five years' imprisonment with hard labor. Ill-treatment in the jail drove him insane, and he was then sentenced to exile in Siberia, where he died.

There were so many of those young, gallant college boys, the manner of whose death was tragic in its loneliness!

The "revolution" at this time was a very simple affair. The government would not allow us to read any books except those which had been read and approved by the ignorant local police.

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The government would not allow any criticism of any official. The government would not allow a noble to live otherwise than as a noble, or a peasant as a peasant. To read a forbidden book was "revolution," to talk to a suspected person was "revolution," to speak critically of the Tsar or any official was "revolution," and punishable with Siberia, to suggest that there should be public schools was "revolution," for a noble to enter a peasant's house and wear peasant's clothes was "revolution," and at every point were police spies, and the dark cloud of suspicion hung over the land. We believed in our "Holy Russia," and tried to work for a brighter day. Therein lay our "crime."

With my return to Kiev I definitely began my work of stirring up a revolution among the working people. I still was full of my idea that brain work was wrong and physical labor right, and since we students already had a few friends

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among some of the men working in a carpenter shop, I went to work in the shop as a journeyman. Gradually I acquired skill. I lived at first in the "Kiev Commune," which was really a revolutionary headquarters to which all those nobles who were toiling among the working people went when they were in town, and remained there either a day or a month, according to their need. It was a wonderful home for us, homeless and often persecuted as we were, and the only question which was asked before admission was:

"Are you willing to go among the peasants immediately?"

If the answer was: "Yes, I'm willing," "Then you are one of us," came the inevitable reply.

The questions of what was to be done among the people, or why one wished to do so, were not asked.

A few weeks after my arrival, when I had my position in the shop, I went to

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live in a small and unsavory room in the poorest part of Kiev. There was really no reason why we should give up all our comforts and privileges, but this desire for poverty was a part of the movement and every one was eager for the sacrifice. It produced marvelous types, this vast struggle for an ideal, and attracted many men who were noted for their brilliance of mind. Sergius Kovalik was one of the most versatile of this band of enthusiasts.

He gave his entire energies to organizing revolutionary societies among young people in the different towns, and finally gathered around him quite a group of young enthusiasts. They all went to the River Volga region, where they started an effective movement against the government.

In this Kovalik was helped by several other famous revolutionaries, one of whom, Voinaralsky, having means of his own, was particularly helpful. They organized trade training schools in which

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the revolutionaries, most of whom were nobles, learned some trade preparatory to going out among the peasants. They kept secret headquarters, where revolutionists could hide in safety when too closely pursued by the police. Finally, Voinaralsky went among the peasants, and openly called them to rise against the government and demand their rights. He was so clever and so evasive that he became almost a legend, and the whole network of the Russian Police system could not hold him in. But at last, years later, he and his companions were caught by the police and sentenced heavily as the fomenters of a conspiracy against the government. By that time the revolution was becoming an organized movement. But, as I have said, this was years later.

One evening, even before Kovalik had gone to the Volga, I came for a few hours' chat at the Commune, and, as it was late, I remained there over night, sleeping in

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the kitchen. I was awakened in the morning by somebody shaking me, and whispering rapidly :

"Quick, get up ! The gendarmes are searching here ! "

It was fortunate for me that they had begun with the other rooms, but still I could not leave the apartment without passing the police at the door.

A sudden inspiration came to me. I was dressed like a working man, and in the mornings it was usual for water-carriers to bring drinking water to the houses. I quickly picked up an empty pail that was standing in the kitchen and calmly walked out of the apartment past the police. They only glanced at me, for the search was being made among students, and I was dressed as a water-carrier. As I passed them, I took off my hat with a frightened peasant air. A year later such a simple escape would not have been possible, but the police still had to learn their lesson.

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After some months' resultless work among the carpenters, we opened a shoemaking place, where we made our own shoes. Kovalik and I started it, and I was the head workman, for I knew something about the making of shoes. Many of the revolutionists came to us to learn the trade. But few of us had money, and we thought it necessary to earn our living. Accordingly, one of the men went to the market with the product of our little industry.

"Shoes like that were made in the time of Peter the Great!" shouted one customer to whom he offered them.

After that we none of us dared to try to sell them. The workmanship of the shoes would have betrayed us, and since the police were looking for me, and Kovalik was also anxious to avoid any questions, we had to give up our shoemaking.

Our next plan was that we should go among the peasants for the purpose of

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organizing small revolutionary uprisings.

We still held the mistaken idea that the peasants were discontented with their lot and anxious to revolt for better conditions. Why none of us saw the fallacy of this idea I do not know, unless it was that we saw only what we wanted to see.

One of our comrades, Vassia, said he knew something about dyeing, so five of us dressed up as dyers and started walking through the villages. Again we had made a mistake. We believed that the peasants were suspicious of a man dressed as a gentleman, or in the clothing of the privileged classes, as we phrased it, so we had obtained torn and shabby clothes. Consequently peasants regarded us with suspicion. We passed several nights without any shelter. It was the rainy season, and I often woke up soaked through to the skin, cold and miserable. Vassia boiled the dye, and one of us looked for orders, of which we never got any,

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for the peasants attended to the dyeing themselves. We ate bread and fat for our only diet. It was truly beyond endurance. Three of our companions gave up from exhaustion, and only Stefanovich and I remained steadfast to the idea.

My next attempt to go among the peasants took me to a railroad construction camp, where I worked for some time, several other nobles also being at work there in disguise. The famous Katherine Breshkovsky at this time was also wandering among the peasants. She was finally tracked by spies, and sent to jail, where she refused to tell her right name, or to give any information.

Upon my return to Kiev I found feverish excitement. Spies were watching everybody known to the police. The situation finally became so acute that I decided to escape abroad, but even this was not such a simple matter, for all the Kiev stations were swarming with spies, many of whom knew me by sight. I

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found a gorgeous disguise as a workman. I had a bright red shirt, with the ends outside the trousers, and a belt, and high boots reaching my knees. In this costume I left Kiev on foot to take a train from a neighboring town, and so avoid all the spies. I succeeded and was safe for several months.

Nevertheless, Father and Mother were constantly harassed, for I was being sought for persistently and without rest. For years the watch was never lifted from my old home, and the police went there frequently. My parents, now old, had to sign a paper in which they agreed never to leave Luka-Barskaya.

I came back again to Kiev, but it was a desolate return. Over one thousand revolutionists had been arrested, many of them our best men and women, and it was only chance that the few of us who remained were still free.

Stefanovich and I finally decided to start a revolutionary movement in the

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Government of Kiev. We selected as our trade the selling of tin articles, and kept a horse and wagon. But we had no money, and although we sold our goods, they hardly covered the cost of keeping the horse, which ate us out of house and home. Gradually others joined our small beginning. It developed later into a true revolutionary rising.

Meanwhile, I started a new centre among the peasants, and this time I changed the old tactics. Instead of wearing old and ragged clothing, I dressed well, and instead of getting false peasant passports, I lived with one taken from a relative of mine who had died. I found that the peasants were much more anxious to listen to me when they knew that I was educated and a noble, and I realized that all these years had been vainly spent, and hundreds of gallant young men and heroic women had gone to Siberia over a false and mistaken policy, yet our ideals

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CURFEW IN A RUSSIAN VILLAGE NEAR THE CITY OF KIEV.

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held true. Then the work of organizing riots began. One of our problems was the arming of the peasants, and another the purchase abroad of a printing-press and smuggling it into Russia.

We only had thirty old revolvers, and our next difficulty was the obtaining of money for the buying of arms. In our fanaticism it seemed simple. But, without our knowledge, a spy had penetrated into our organization. Some of us tried to kill him, but failed. This led to his giving out of a vast amount of information, and, as he knew our headquarters and all our work, at a moment's notice we had to scatter broadcast.

To a forest outside Kharkov, as appointed, the dispersed members gradually made their way. By marvellous good fortune every one of us had escaped the clutches of the spies and the gendarmes, and we met in full numbers at the secret place.

I remember few things sadder in my

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life than that meeting. It remains in my memory as the burying ground of our illusions. There, with the flush of excitement worn away, we looked at each other and at the ruins of our work. Some spoke eagerly of beginning anew, but many of the others showed not only that they had lost heart, but that they had also lost faith. Most of us had discovered the fallacy of thinking that the moujiks were anxious for a revolution, and we realized that it was necessary to organize the reform of Russia by different methods.

Referring to our failure, Ivan said to me one day:

"We have failed because we were too far removed from the people. The gulf between the nobles and the peasant masses cannot be bridged by a mere change of clothing and passports."

Heavy-hearted, many of us shattered in health, shorn of the dreams that had glorified our sufferings, we revolutionists

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went away from Kharkov. Broken men and women, most of us with nowhere to go, for none could return to homes, and still and forever to be hiding as "suspects," and all young, so young!

While most of us were trying to find some way to earn a living under forged passports, the resolute three, Stefanovich, Deutsch, and Bokhanovsky were really organizing a small revolution, and they used as headquarters a flat in a small house on the outskirts of Kiev, where we also kept our secret printing-press, on which we printed revolutionary pamphlets. Through one of the peasants, who was caught, the three were betrayed, and all were arrested. Bokhanovsky had the key to our rooms, and this was confiscated, but since he would not give the address, there was no danger of discovery for some time. Still, the police began scouring Kiev in the effort to locate the lock into which this key fitted. As this flat was a revolutionary headquar-

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ters, its location was not generally known, and aside from the men in prison, I was the only person who knew of it. It was necessary to clear the house of the press and any compromising papers. Although I was in Odessa at this time, I came immediately. Our main difficulty was getting in, for we had no key.

For several days we discussed plans for getting out the large printing-press. We even found three burglars who were willing to rob the house and get the things out, but on the night set for the attempt, the police must have suspected something, for they started whistling, so that we all had to run for our lives. Then we sent a locksmith, who made another key, and one of the revolutionists came to the landlady and told her that he was a relative of Bokhanovsky, who had allowed him to enter the rooms and live there. He had the key to prove the truth of the story. We had the place cleared in forty-eight hours and a few

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days after that the police located the house, but there was nothing in the rooms. The gendarmes realized that the place had been cleaned out, and began looking for those who had done it. We all scattered.

The arrest of these three of my comrades after the secret conclave in the forest outside Kharkov marks the close of the first period of the revolution, the time when we believed that all we had to do was to make the peasants understand that we were ready to lead them into a newer liberty and a life of greater happiness. All this was the work of a handful of university students, full of the mad enthusiasms of youth, and striving to rid the country of the chains of an old tradition.

Then came an even deeper and more tragic note. A tall, fair young fellow, always exceedingly well-dressed, moody, but as lively as quicksilver, and the very flush of energy, came to Kiev. This was

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Valerian Ossinsky. He reawakened much of the old enthusiasm, for he had the talent for organization and he had a plan. Political freedom for every one he craved, but—this was a fearful "but"—he believed that the government should be frightened into granting it. And this fear should be created, not by a revolution that attacked a system, but by the selection and killing of those brutal officials, who had become tyrants of oppression. They should know terror for themselves. Sleeping or waking, at home or abroad, the shadow of death should lie over them, and the grisly spectre of Terror should never leave them.

Thus Terrorism began.

Ossinsky's immediate concern in Kiev was the organization of an escape for our three comrades, Stefanovich, Deutsch and Bokhanovsky. We were all helping, and the first thing we did was to bribe a keeper, so that we could safely exchange letters with the imprisoned men. We

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were fearfully concerned about them, because they had actually organized secret fighting groups among the peasants, and these had been discovered by the police.

I was living with two comrades in a small apartment at this time, and it was here that Ossinsky came with the letters from the prisoners. We discussed numerous plans of escape until we finally settled on one. Michel Frolenko, after much trouble, obtained the position of helper with the warden of the Kiev prison, where our friends were incarcerated. His plan was to work up till he obtained a position which would enable him to liberate the prisoners.

Meanwhile, little by little, the plans of Terrorism gripped even the most peaceful of our circle. I was opposed to it. At our meetings each new outrage only made our anger burn deeper. Most of it centered on Kotliarovsky, the head of an investigation among the peasants to find

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out the name of every noble who had been fomenting trouble among them.

Even then, I doubt if Kotliarovsky would have been attacked, but that once, when a young girl revolutionist was arrested, he ordered that she should be searched by his men. I have said that we were like knights of the olden time and held respect to a woman as a foundation stone in our ideals. It was when the ignorant officials abused their power and hurled insults at the heroic girl students who had suffered with us in the cause that they signed their own death warrants.

On the night of February 28, 1878, I was awakened by a tapping on my window, which looked out onto the street.

"Who is it?" I asked.

"Valerian," said the voice outside, softly. I let him and two of his comrades in. Ossinsky came in softly, and looking at me through his gold-rimmed glasses, said in a quiet whisper:

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"Kotliarovsky is killed!"

I shivered.

"When?" I asked, dully.

"Just now . . . we've come from there."

In a few words he told that he had shot the hated official in the street and that he had fallen instantly.

"You're sleeping here?" I asked.

"Yes—probably the streets are alive with police now."

"Then go to bed—we must put out the light right away," I said.

We spread blankets and lay down.

Kotliarovsky was a brute, but—no, I could not make myself believe in Terrorism. I could not sleep.

Suddenly, in the distance, I heard the regular beat of a drum.

"Rousing help," I thought to myself.

"Valerian, do you hear?" I asked.

"I hear."

"Beating a drum," I said.

"Yes."

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The other two men went to sleep, but I heard Ossinsky tossing restlessly hour after hour.

The next day we found out that Kotliarovsky had not even been wounded; the shot had missed him and he had fallen from sheer fright. The attempt roused the town. In the name of the famous Executive Committee we began printing proclamations of a revolutionary character, which we used to post all over Kiev during the night. One of us was sent to fifteen years' hard labor when caught sticking up one of these posters.

By this time Frolenko had gained the confidence of the warden, and we knew that at the first vacancy, among the keepers who held the keys, Frolenko would obtain the position. Then he could simply open the cell doors of our comrades.

Our next step was to get rid of a keeper. We chose a drunkard, named Ponomarenko. I dressed up as a rich

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brandy distiller and went to one of the good hotels. I sent him a message to come and see me, and told him he had been recommended to me by a man for whom he had formerly worked. I offered him work at my distillery, and he could not resist the temptation. He told me that he would resign from the prison, and let me have his passport right away. Since he could not get his passport from the warden without resigning, when he brought it to me next day, I knew the way was clear for Frolenko. I gave Ponomarenko some money, and told him that I had a short trip to make, and that he should wait to hear from me.

Our calculations worked out perfectly. As soon as he left, Frolenko obtained the position of keeper, and we began planning the flight. We decided that the best way was for the prisoners to escape in a boat down the River Dnieper, on which Kiev stands. Then, at a sufficient distance from Kiev, they could take the train

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and escape. Some of us were entrusted with the buying of provisions, for the refugees could not leave the boat and be seen anywhere, so they had to have a sufficiency of food; others had to buy a cart and horse to take the men from the prison to the river, and then we had to provide them with clothing.

At last all was ready. That night somebody knocked at my window. It was Frolenko.

"Well? What's happened?" I showered him with questions.

"They've escaped," he said, walking calmly into my room.

"How?"

"Just as we had planned. I got the keepers drunk, so they dozed off. I opened the cell and took them out. At the gate the watchman challenged us. I told him that we were going off duty, and he let us through. That's all."

I watched Frolenko as he told me this simple story, and there was no trace of

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excitement on his face, except that his eyes burned a little.

"I took them to the river," he continued in answer to my questions, "and you got an awful horse. My arms are still sore from hammering the beast—it wouldn't run. Well, I suppose you'd better give me the scissors—I'll cut my beard."

And Michel gave up the rest of the night to changing his appearance.

Not in Kiev alone, but in Petrograd, in Odessa, in all the larger towns of Russia, Terrorism spread. Scarcely a day passed without news of some outbreak planned, or carried out. A gendarme officer named Heiking, who had been especially active in attacking us, was shot and killed by Ossinsky and his friends. We printed a proclamation stating that the killing of Heiking and the escape of Stefanovitch, Deutsch and Bokhanovsky were the work of the "Executive Committee."

Kiev was in an uproar. It was felt that

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no official's life was safe. The gendarmes were stirred to savage action. Every suspicious apartment was ransacked.

Above me lived two girl students. The police broke into their rooms and searched. I heard—but there was nothing I could do. Frolenko and the slayers of Heiking were living with me, hidden, for I had secured a false passport and was safe for the time being. Besides, in a cupboard in my rooms was a small printing-press.

Every day were arrests and more arrests. Some were our comrades, many were innocent. Several were hanged. But the man who ordered the first hanging was killed two days later. In every town this happened. The Executive Committee added new officials to its death list, and paid the fatal price. Slowly the net around us tightened. Our days were numbered. The spies added link to link of the chain; they gained admission even to the inner circle, but we could not trace them.

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The first blow was the arrest of Ossinsky on January 24, 1879. Then came the fateful day of February eleventh. It was a Russian holiday, so we all gathered in two houses to pass the evening. In the first house where I lived, there was a great number of revolutionists, Brantner amongst many others. I had gone to our other gathering place with the rest of the revolutionists, among whom was Sviridenko.

All were sitting quietly in my rooms, when a knock came and a gendarme entered.

"Is *Gospodin* (Mr.) De Bogory Mokrievitch here?" he asked.

"No—there is no De Bogory Mokrievitch here," answered one of the men.

"Where is he?"

One of the comrades pulled out a revolver.

"Where is he?" repeated the gendarme, backing toward the door, also drawing his revolver and hammering

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with his heel on the door. A dozen gendarmes rushed in, and at the same moment Brantner and another of the revolutionists advanced with revolvers drawn. It has never been known who fired first.

There was a fusillade of shots. The gendarmes wore armor, but one was killed instantly by a bullet through his head. The two foremost of my comrades were mortally wounded, but one of them, lying on the floor, shouted, amid his agony:

"Attack them with knives, brothers!"

Brantner, though wounded, went on shooting. The women revolutionists hastily threw compromising documents in the fire while the battle was going on, while others, in the teeth of the pistol fire, gave first aid to their dying friends. The defense was too desperate and the gendarmes finally gave way.

But escape was beyond hope. There was a double ring of gendarmes around

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the house. One of my wounded comrades reached the gate, where he collapsed, and Brantner fainted from his wound when trying to climb the wall of the yard. More gendarmes came, so many that defense was impossible. Still, so terrible was that handful of men and women in that little room that even the soldiers were afraid to approach, and it was only when the revolutionists agreed not to fire that they were put under arrest.

Brantner and the comrade near the gate were found and sent to the hospital with the two dying revolutionists. The others were taken to the station house.

Meanwhile we knew nothing about all this until the door opened, and we found a solid line of soldiers behind with fixed bayonets. Fortunately, Sviridenko and another man had left a few moments before.

"Surrender," said a voice.

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"We're not a fortress," I answered with a smile.

"But your comrades——" began the officer.

I could not hear the rest of the sentence, for the soldiers burst in, and drowned his words.

He searched us all for arms, but we had none, so we were taken to the police station, where we came upon our comrades. From them I learned of the desperate affray.

Sviridenko, who had been caught on the street, suddenly rushed in, with two policemen helplessly dragging on behind.

"They're bound," he shouted, looking at us all, and began untying the ropes that bound us.

"Please calm yourself," repeated the police commissioner, unable to overcome his obedience to a noble; "we'll untie them."

"I want water," shouted Sviridenko.

"Water—do you hear?—quick, get

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some!" ordered the commissioner, only too eager to be obliging as long as his orders were fulfilled.

It was many years ago, but I can still see Sviridenko, with his pale face wreathed in a mass of black, thick curly hair, bullying the commissioner, who had us in his power.

We were all taken to the Kiev jail. Soon our two wounded comrades died in the hospital and Brantner joined us.

The charges against us were very serious. Whereas some of us were held for armed resistance and the killing of an officer, others, such as myself, were connected with many revolutionary undertakings and had lived as "illegals." Spies came to the prison from everywhere to identify us, and even Ponomarenko was brought to identify me as the wine distiller. I looked him straight in the eyes, and I saw that he did not recognize me, so perfect had been my disguise.

"We know all about it," said the

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gendarme, trying to break down my guard.

A woman who had been in the hotel was asked to identify me. She looked at me. I saw that she knew, but she only said softly:

"I can't tell."

On April third we were taken to trial, and forbidden the lawyers we wished. We were all sentenced to fourteen years and ten months hard labor, with the exception of Brantner and Sviridenko, who were condemned to death for armed resistance.

When the sentence was passed, one of the women prisoners became hysterical. The police rushed for water, and we all rose from the benches on which we were sitting. There was a general tumult. The spectators also stood up, and some even climbed on their chairs to see better.

"What are you looking at?" shouted Sviridenko. "This is no theatre. It is a disgrace to you making a show of death!"

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There was a hushed silence. All sat down quickly, and ashamedly began leaving the court as rapidly as possible.

Ossinsky was tried later—and sentenced to death. There was no hope. Our three comrades were doomed. Sviridenko gave a false name as he did not want his old mother to know of his death. He spoke about her to me many times, as we sat on our cell windows. He died under that false name, to save her a heart-wrench.

I could not think of my comrades' deaths, it seemed too terrible to be true. The last night came. I climbed on the window sill and sat there, pressed against the iron bars, not daring to think of the morrow. It was a warm night, and very still. Everybody was quiet; I think probably all were seated as I was. The only sound was the voice of Ossinsky, as he spoke to his betrothed, Sophia Leshern, who was in the woman's prison across the empty courtyard.

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"Four, five, seven, two, eight, zero!" he said rapidly, in the cipher we used.

She answered.

Ossinsky could not keep still. He asked me to sing him Beranger's "Death of a Corporal." It is a song—you may know it—of a death by shooting.

Ossinsky hoped but for one thing, that he would be shot on the morrow; he could not bring himself to think of the scaffold. I sang it, though my throat was wrung with choked-down tears. Twice afterward during that night I sang it to him again.

It was getting very late.

"Sonia!" came Ossinsky's voice.

"Valerian!" she answered.

No more was said.

Next morning . . .

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CHAPTER VIII

MY ESCAPE FROM SIBERIA

Soon after the death of our comrades, we had to prepare for our long journey to Siberia, and not only to Siberia, but to the mines. That meant incredible hardship and insufferable cruelty for fourteen years,—for fourteen long, weary years. It meant that most of us would die lonely and neglected in a filthy prison cell. And so many were so young, so young! Fourteen years' hard labor in the Siberian mines, and for what? For trying to bring greater freedom to our beloved country. But that old hard, unseeing Russia is going; Russia to-day, alert, making vast strides to help her people, building public schools by scores, with huge government departments organized to aid the peasants and bring them to

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greater values of life, is doing the work that we began. Ossinsky did not die in vain, and our dream is coming true.

Before leaving for Siberia, Ivan came to see me and he slipped me a one-hundred-rouble note. The keeper had noticed it, so when Ivan had gone he insisted on searching me. He looked everywhere, even in my hair and my mouth. But he could find nothing, so finally, very much puzzled, he let me return to my cell. He never thought of looking in the palm of my hand, where I had been holding the money quietly all the while.

We knew that we were going to Siberia, although we did not know where we were going to be sent. Of all the revolutionaries with me, only two were not nobles. These two were put in irons and their hair was cut, but our rank saved us from some of the miseries of the journey. We traveled by train through Russia to Nijni-Novgorod, where we were taken on

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barges on the rivers Volga and Kama to the town of Perm. In addition to our party of political exiles there were also a number of criminals, who were being sent to Siberia. From there we went by train to Ekaterinburg, and wherever we went, I only thought and dreamed of my escape. I had spent six years dodging capture, and I was not going to take my sentence lightly, without making one last supreme effort to get away.

From Ekaterinburg we traveled in *vozoks*, or small three-horse carts, with one prisoner in each. Beside each political exile sat a gendarme, armed with a revolver and sword, and beside the driver sat a soldier armed with a rifle. We drove rapidly along the flat country, and I thought with dread of the terrible Siberian winters. Our vozoks with the little bells tinkling on the harness moved rapidly, one behind the other, along the famous Siberian Tract, which all the exiles used to pass. Several times I

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thought of escape, but we traveled without stopping, sleeping in the vozok during the nights. I could see no chance of escape, for I was dressed in coarse grey prison clothing, clumsily sewn, and this would have instantly caused capture. After several days of this travel we were again taken still further east by barge till we reached Surgut. At Tomsk we were taken to the big prison, on the walls of which we found the names of the women revolutionists of our group, who had been sentenced with us. This was the first news we had of them, and now we knew that they were traveling ahead of us. We were hurried on by vozok until we reached Krasnoyarsk, the boundary town of Eastern Siberia. We had left Russia and Western Siberia behind us.

All during the journey we found the authorities anxious to please the political exiles and avoid trouble. As nobles we obtained many privileges, and were

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given fur coats when we asked for them on the plea that we were cold at night. We remained in Krasnoyarsk for some weeks, awaiting further orders.

It was the end of August when six of the political exiles, among whom I was one, were ordered to proceed to Irkutsk by the so-called "etape." In front came several files of soldiers. Then walked the criminals, of whom there were about one hundred and eighty in irons. They were being sent to exile, which meant that they had to go to certain villages, and there remain free, so long as they did not try to leave the place. Behind them came about fifteen wagons, in which were the wives and children of the exiles. Next followed a few wagons in which nobles, who had been convicted as criminals, were riding, for no noble was required to walk, and we political exiles came last. A file of soldiers walked on either side of this procession, and there was a detachment behind.

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Many of the criminals took off their irons as soon as we left the town, and the officers made no objection. Their orders were strict, but there were many mutual concessions made on the part of the officers and prisoners. That evening we came to the *polu-etape*, or half etape, where there was a jail. We, as nobles, were kept apart from the peasant prisoners, so that we slept under better and cleaner conditions than the others. At the end of the next day we reached the etape, which differed from the *polu-etape* only by being a little larger.

Studying carefully the make-up of the party and the strong organization among the criminal prisoners, which amounted to a union, whose orders none dared disobey, I first conceived my plan of escape. The problem was not that of escape alone, for that was comparatively easy. There was not much difficulty in breaking away and hiding in the primitive forests through which we were traveling; the

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POLU-ETAPE.

KRASNOIARSK PRISON.

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proolem was to live afterwards when the dreaded "battue" had been organized, the battue of Siberia, most thorough and discouraging of all systems. Still we were all set on an attempt, and it was agreed that one of us would escape first and organize the rescue of the others. Vladislav Isbitzky was chosen for this part.

Since the criminals were going into exile, and were sent to special villages, where they would be freed, our plan was to exchange places with them and under their guise leave the party at the village in which the peasant was supposed to settle. The honor of the prisoners, due to their organization, prevented them from revealing the deception. Once in the village it would be easy to escape. Meanwhile the criminal would continue as a political prisoner. When the deception was discovered, it would not entail much punishment for him, and this was more than compensated by the reward (we gave

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them money and clothing) which would make his life much easier in the new country. Besides this, for a peasant to aid in freeing one of the revolutionist nobles, who was giving his life for the cause, was a great honor.

After the escape, it was planned that Isbitzky should travel ahead of us rapidly enough to reach the *polu-etape* and there make a secret tunnel to the prison, through which we could all escape. We agreed that he should leave chalk marks along the telegraph poles, so that we might know he was safely ahead of us.

The day of the exchange, as we left the etape, sitting on our slow moving wagons, we saw Isbitzky standing before an izba in a bright red shirt, smiling. That was the last time I saw him. For many days we noted the marks on the poles, and then they disappeared. After that we looked in vain. Later, we learned that he had to return to Tomsk for lack of money, which he procured, and then started after

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us. But delays occurred, and he did not reach the party until it had arrived at its destination, which was the silver mines of Kara. His fate is unknown, for he disappeared; possibly he was killed by robbers on the road.

Since the chalk marks had vanished, we made other plans for the escape. I found Pavlov, a criminal, willing to exchange with me. This was done with very little trouble, and after that, I walked with the criminals, sometimes with irons on my feet. I suffered horribly, and almost starved on the coarse and scanty food.

As we advanced, bread became scarce and dear. Hunger marched in the grim procession. The yellow parchment skin of starvation showed on every face. We walked with difficulty. The criminals asked permission from the officers to sing *milostinia*, the begging song, upon entering the villages. This was granted. So, when we came to villages, the basses started the slow, melancholy chant to the

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accompaniment of the clang of the irons and the squeaking of the wagon wheels. Several of the prisoners went from izba to izba with bags, begging for food. In nightmares I see that march again and hear the slow drone of the starving men, eager for a crust.

To famine was added typhoid, and as the etape hospitals were scores of versts apart, many of the men were placed on the wagons when they became too ill to travel. One man died on the way, and we traveled with his body for many miles till we came to the etape.

At last we reached the village at which I was to be set free, with several other men. I was examined, and, according to the part of the criminal with whom I had exchanged, I gave my name as Petrov and my crime that of being a thief. So, with the prison clothing, which became mine, I was allowed to walk out with my fellow-criminals as a free man, free, but three thousand miles from home, free only to

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try to rescue my comrades. Still, I was at liberty.

Free! I could hardly believe it as I walked down the street of the village. The other prisoners all went to an inn and I went with them, but I did not intend to remain any length of time in that village, for I feared that either somebody might report the exchange or tell of it at the first questioning. I had no money, and only the address of a friend exiled to a village that was 150 versts (100 miles) from my present whereabouts. I could do no better than go there. I sold some of the clothing I had for a rouble and a half (seventy-five cents), and after a night's rest in the inn, started out early the next day.

I had a prison fur coat and cap to match, trousers of grey cotton, prison boots with leather gaiters. I had an extra shirt and cotton trousers. That was my entire baggage, and Siberian winter was fast approaching, for it was

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the second day of November. My head was cropped, but since prisoners traveled, when there was no battue, openly in Siberia, I was not afraid of the fact that all could see I had been a convict.

I knew the direction I had to walk in, and nothing more, so I started. But as I walked through the dense forests I did not have the feeling of freedom, for I realized that I was just as far from freedom as before, for now I was at the mercy of the Siberian elements. I spent my nights in the village baths, and often, since the peasants were all kindly disposed to the convicts and helped them, I had a warm bed. I used to buy a crust of bread for a few kopecks, and the peasants, knowing that I was an escaped convict, sometimes gave it to me. Often the peasants, themselves exiles, treated me to a glass of tea.

After a weary journey I finally reached the village in which my friend was supposed to be. I knew which izba he oc-

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cupied, so I counted off the izbas, and entered the one I had been told he lived in. An old woman met me.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"I'm looking for some exiles," I said. "Nobles."

"There are lots of nobles, exiles," she answered looking at me suspiciously.

Suddenly an inner door opened, and a young woman came out. I knew immediately that she was a "political" exile, by her appearance first, and then by her speech.

"What do you want?" she asked, looking at me.

"I have a little business," I said, coming up to her, and gently pushing her back into the room, so as to speak to her not in the hearing of the old woman. She spread her arms across the door jamb, but finally fell back.

"What do you want?" she repeated.

I was already in the room and I closed the door behind me.

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"I'm De Bogory Mokrievitch," I said in a whisper, "just escaped from the party on the way."

"You—De Bogory Mokrievitch! Oh!" she said.

"Have you heard about our trial?"

She clasped her hands about my arm.

"Tell me all, all!" she said.

I cannot describe the excitement that spread in this little house, and a neighboring one, in which another political exile lived. My friend was not in the village, but by mere chance I had met some other of the exiles.

I was freezing, and as a samovar stood on the table, I had just sat down to drink a glass of tea, when I was told that the gendarmes had come to the village. I had to escape. My new friends told me how to leave the village, and where to go, and added that a man, whose description they gave me, would catch up to me on a sleigh and would take me to safety.

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I had not a kopeck left, so they gave me a rouble from their own scanty stores. Thus, without a chance to change clothing or appearance, and knowing that I looked like a veritable tramp, I had to go. The police might not have come for me, but I could take no chances.

The sleigh soon caught up with me, and took me a big part of the way to the village in which the man lived. He agreed to hide me on condition that I come to him at night, so that nobody should see me come in. He told me where his house was, and left me.

Then I learned—and for a moment I turned cold at the peril—that the battue was on. It is a good word—that battue, meaning as it does the rousing of a neighborhood to drive and trap some wild beast to his death. The battue was on for Isbitzky and for me, and also for a political exile from a party traveling behind us, who, however, by dallying one day too long in the village of his exchange, was

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later caught and sent on to the silver mines at Kara. I have told you that Isbitzky disappeared. I was the wild beast to be trapped. My description was sent to every village over the two thousand miles of desolation between where I was and Russia. An order was issued that every stranger, no matter if his passports were in perfect order, should be arrested and searched. To give me food or shelter was a crime punishable with sentence to the mines. And the Siberian winter was at hand. There was but one thing to do, and many of the villagers did that thing. They would put food on the window ledges for any starved passer-by. And day by day the cold fell more intense, the wind blew keener, and the snows of Siberia began.

But the police were hot upon my trail. The escape of De Bogory Mokrievitch was, they thought, dangerous to the peace of Russia. Siberia became as one vast eye looking night and day, and looking for

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KERGEZ CHILDREN AT PLAY.
Western Siberia.

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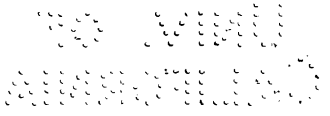

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me. An exile, who had given me a night's shelter, gave me the address of a Polish exile three villages away. Somehow, by some mad power that must have been the exhilaration of near-exhaustion, I reached the village. It was midnight when I knocked at his door.

The door opened.

"I'm De Bogory Mokrievitch," I said. "Will you hide me?"

He stood aside to let me enter.

"Yes," he replied.

To this man I owe my safety. The fact that I spoke Polish was my salvation. Once, when I was in this exile's store—he was keeping the village shop, he who had owned a couple of thousand families of serfs before the emancipation—the police asked for my friend. I answered in Polish that I knew very little Russian and suspicion was averted for the time.

The story of that hiding is told in hours, not in days. A dozen times I was

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all but captured, but caution never slept, and I was held safe among those Polish exiles. Even to-day I dare not mention names, for the penalty of helping a political prisoner to escape is many years of hard labor. I can only repay that kindness by silence.

For one month and a half the battue was in full operation. Every man along the roads was arrested, every man who had the insignia of the convict was stopped. Nobody was allowed to pass by. At every village special guards were stationed to question strangers. Not a fly could have crept through. I realized why even the most hardened convicts regarded the battue with dread.

As soon as the first fervor of the battue had abated, I decided to go to Irkutsk. Here I organized the escape of five of my old comrades from the Irkutsk jail by means of a tunnel. I drove them in a sled to safety, and I provided them with provisions, so as to avoid their having to

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enter any villages. Alas, all were caught, although much later.

Few of us political prisoners had the physique to withstand the terrible Siberian winter, for we were of the nobility, and unused to hardship. The escape created great excitement, and again I had to seek a hiding-place among strangers, and again I was saved by the kindness of people.

I would not leave Siberia, however, without one last attempt to rescue the men and women of my own group, my old comrades, who had already reached the silver mines of Kara, to which I had been destined. Well disguised, I bought a horse and cart and became an itinerant merchant. This not only gave me a living, which I had to earn, since I had no money, but it also covered the real reason for my distant journey.

Months later I reached Kara, and settled there as a merchant. I lived in a small house, close to the jail, for half a year, making my plans for the escape.

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The unexpected happened. A party of prisoners arrived, among whom was a peasant criminal who knew me. To curry favor he reported my presence. I escaped by the rear window, as the police battered in my door. This time a battue was not ordered, as the authorities did not want to admit that they had allowed so dangerous a character as De Bogory Mokrievitch to live there five months unobserved by them.

I had to admit at last that I could do no more to help my comrades, for I was too well known, and to take a chance on another battue was unwise. So, with heavy heart, I returned, knowing that I was leaving Siberia and my comrades forever.

I traveled for many months, first on my own horse, which I finally sold, then by troika, hired from village to village. I had lived one year in Siberia after my escape, and now I was on my way back to Russia.

It was in February, 1881, that I arrived

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in Moscow, and soon after that date, Alexander II was killed by the Terrorists. I had intended taking up revolutionary work again, but I found that during my absence ideas had changed, and that I could not agree with the Terrorist plans for the liberation of Russia. Ivan was in prison and died there. The police activity became so great that I feared spies who had known me might recognize me, and I was obliged to escape again. I left Russia then and went to Switzerland, an exile from the country in which I was born, and for which I sacrificed the best years of my life.

In Switzerland I married a Russian noblewoman, who had left her home in order to study medicine. She had been educated in the most exclusive of Russian schools, called the Institutes, where the girls were trained to be society women and ladies of the Court. But she aspired to a profession, with which ambition her

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parents entirely disagreed, whereupon she had left them and left Russia. We have one daughter.

I lived in America and England for some years, then went to Bulgaria, where so many Russian exiles dwell. It seemed nearer to Russia in this Slavic-speaking country. My university training, so many years set aside, served me in good stead, and I became a civil engineer, in charge of all the city planning and engineering of several Bulgarian towns. My memoirs were also written and first published in Paris, but, after the revolution of 1905, republished in Petrograd.

Luka-Barskaya ceased to be ours even before my parents' death, and I never saw the old home again. But though the amnesty of 1905 did not cover me and give me the privilege of returning to Russia, I live in banishment well enough content that Ivan has not died in vain, nor am I still an exile fruitlessly. It is beyond belief how Russia has advanced, and many

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of my early dreams have been realized. I think of Ivan, of Donetzky, of Ossinsky, and my heart is very sore within me. I look at Russia and I am well content.

THE END

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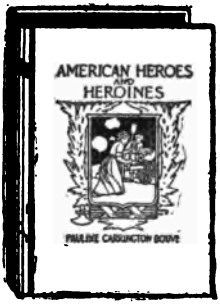

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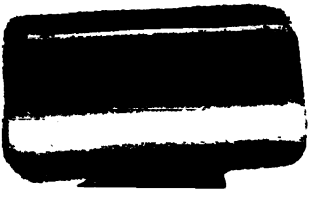

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